

SEEDS OF RESURRECTION: A MODEL OF AGRICULTURAL SPIRITUALITY  
ROOTED IN THE NARRATIVES OF FEMALE-RUN FAITH-BASED FARMS IN THE US

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by  
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## ABSTRACT

There is an emerging consciousness of environmental justice, food issues, and spiritual formation surrounding ecosystems in the world. However, when it comes to understanding these issues as they relate to theological themes, the discussions of practical theology, spiritual formation, and agriculture are largely informed by white males (Wendell Berry, Aldo Leopold, and Wes Jackson). This dissertation engages the fields of practical theology, historical Christian spirituality, ecofeminism, and agriculture by presenting an original narrative inquiry, feminist participant action study of four female-run faith-based farms in the United States. By traveling to farms in four different states and conducting site tours, in-depth interviews, and working alongside the farmers, narratives emerged regarding the spiritual formation happening on each site. Plans were also developed for faith-based advocacy as they relate theology and agriculture. Each phase of data collection, transcription, and narrative writing was shared with the farmers for their feedback and input in order to embrace a partnership ethic in the research. The themes and threads from the data, reflexive journals, and thematic analysis from practical theology, spiritual formation, and ecology, merge to present a new model for agricultural spirituality.

The model of agricultural spirituality argues for moving segregated parts of place, spirituality, practical theology, and God to embracing an interconnected web of life. This involves an examination of the processes of life, death, and resurrection in the areas of place, relationship, and God – merging these parts together in a deeper process of embodied work. This model relies on historical foundations of Christian Spirituality and US history, but also presents itself in light of today's practices of farming, ecofeminism, eating, and spiritual discipline. Faith communities need to further connect faith, farming, and food as shown in the model in order to offer reconciliation and resurrection to, not only people, but the ecosystems around them. Understanding the agricultural spirituality in these farmers' stories who are on the margins of this work is the foundation and example needed to move forward towards resilience and hope.

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And to my boys, you both were birthed into this process. Thatcher, I found out I was pregnant with you when I started my first semester of classes. Shepherd, you traveled in my belly to every farm in this dissertation. This work is richer because you were part of it. I often feel the weight of being a mom to two white boys. Your privilege in this world is something I hope to continue to teach you to use to care for this earth and all the kin here. Raising two kind, compassionate men will be one of the most important jobs I ever have – to demonstrate to you to use your strength and gifts to heal a hurting world. So as much as this work is about women, it is about both of you because I desire for you to grow up knowing you can empower those around you, help those around you, and learn from your surroundings and emotions. Your sweet, energetic spirits challenge me and teach me more about life, death, and resurrection each day. I pray you both know how much I love you and why mommy is called to this work – because life stops if we stop caring about our neighbors, so let us keep growing together in faith, word, and action. With all my love and gratitude.

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## INTRODUCTION

I did not intend to be in this place. I am in the vacant parking lot of the Oneida Nation Museum outside of Green Bay, Wisconsin. The museum is closed. But I walk around the grounds and short trail outside, reading the signage explaining the way first nation people lived here and the names of trees and shrubs. The temperature is in the forties and the surrounding fields are covered in mud. Studying first nation people is not why I am here. I am supposed to meet white, second and third generation mother and daughter dairy farmers down the road, but something draws me to this place. This land was not always occupied by silos and cows. There is something deeply spiritual about this land, but also a tiredness and a weariness too. Perhaps that is just my body which aches with new life as I grow a human in my belly. At this moment, I am 16 weeks pregnant; the baby is the size of an apricot. I look out at the mud surrounding me on all sides which is about to be planted with acres of monocultures of soybeans, corn, and hay. It seems to embrace its stickiness, wanting something deeper and richer, and my tiredness gives way to my own curiosity of this place.

First nation people in North America are known for their connection to the earth. The land, sea, and animals are recognized in their totem poles and ceremonies. Much has been said about indigenous spirituality and the connections to place, tribe, living things, and people. I grew up in a place deeply rooted in Native American tradition: Washington State. But my conservative evangelical upbringing in the 1980s and 90s told me we won. Won what? I am still not sure other than the “right” to dominate a people group and take over their land. That does not seem like winning; it seems like oppression and bullying. I was taught indigenous people just needed to find Christ to heal them from plights of alcoholism and abuse that plagued the reservations. In a

way, this was its own form of bullying and oppression: both of how we were taught about insider/outside dynamics and how we were to engage with others.

As I grew and dove into my background and heritage, I learned my great grandmother five times removed was a first nation woman. This might seem insignificant as I am not trying to identify as anything other than white, but in locating my family story, this part of our history seems forgotten – the women of my family seem like background figures. This is true of my grandmothers and watching my mother's journey when I was an adolescent. Their work in the kitchen mattered more than their stories and dreams. Stories from of my ancestry have come in bits and pieces over the decades of my life. I learned one grandmother preserved food and grew up greatly affected by the great depression, but I never heard this from her. Another grandmother I never met, who died in open heart surgery before my mother met my father, was a writer. Another great grandmother grew a victory garden in World War II.

My grandmothers had strong connections to their faith and their families which was passed to my mother. They were strong women who lived in the shadow of men's legacies. They were protectors and stood up for their beliefs. I do not mean in an evangelical sense, but in standing up for their children and political values. My own mother is champion for her Lutheranism. She brought tradition, liturgy, and belief in God to the forefront of our family. It was only by accident I became conservative through a school she sent me to – a school that taught me it was more important to memorize bible verses than to serve others. Our morality was measured in the length of our skirts. It took some time to learn who I was outside of a right and wrong paradigm where God looked more like Santa Claus with a naughty and nice list. I recommitted my life to God no less than five times by the time I was 16. But there was a nagging sense there was more to God and my spirituality than assuring my salvation every two years.

It was much later in grad school where I came to understand the radical love of Jesus and discovered a passion of helping others. Even then, it was not until my husband, Nate, and I became homesteaders that I unearthed what putting down roots really means in literal, figurative, and spiritual ways. When we purchased our home in Monrovia, California, we also moved into a neighborhood with a local church four blocks from our front door. We were used to commuting to church. Nate and I were first known there because we asked certain members if they wanted to raise chickens with us. Chickens were the second step in a multi-year process of converting our quarter-acre of land into a homestead – a place where we would raise our own food and animals and share with our neighbors too. Our home, church, land, and community merged together in a way where I could not ignore something deeper happening, and I still acknowledge this. Attending to seedlings and animals is spiritual discipline. Sharing our abundance with our neighbors is a literal practice. Watering every day, harvesting, and preserving food is as important as prayer and study. Our church is Nazarene, but I do not locate myself as a Nazarene. I locate myself in the spirituality and relationships of this place: the city of Monrovia. God (or the Divine) moves and breathes and reveals Herself to me in this space.

It is those movements that led me back to graduate school and ultimately to this dissertation. This work is a culmination of my past and present to find out more about who I am and the work I am supposed to be doing as a practitioner, scholar, mother, wife, community and ecosystem member. I come at this work from a Christian background because of my heritage. I also think the Christian church is in a season of needing resources to understand ways to heal and connect with communities. Farming and eating have long been great connectors in faith communities. Indeed, in some places they still are. But with Christian churches aging and denominations splintering, why invest in this conversation? Why not explore comparative

religious studies or fully embrace an ecofeminist ethic that leaves faith behind? (Though it should be noted, I think those are vital issues. I fully embrace comparative religious studies, ecofeminist ideas, and interfaith dialogue and action.)

I want to say it is because of my heritage and faith that I believe the Christian church can still be a refuge and holy place as well as a place of reconciliation and actor in social justice; a place that honors a person no matter what they believe because they matter. I want my grandmothers' stories to matter; I want my mother's story to matter, and I want the stories of the land to matter as society continues to pillage Mother Earth. I want people to ask, "What was here?" and "What needs to be here?" of a place – listening to different organisms around them. If Christians treated the land and spirituality as important as a sacred text, I wonder what could happen? So I ended up here, studying women farmers in the United States because they have not been included in the dialogue of farming and faith. There is research on women farmers in the US and there are writings on farming and faith. However, when it comes to women's history of farming, the faith part is overlooked in previous research, and the farming and faith literature often leaves out women entirely or includes them as a small minority. Further, there is a spiritual experience to this vocation, and I did not see concrete examples or models of those experiences in the literature. Instead scholars and authors included lists to follow or theologies of thought with limited ways to engage and interact with the practices of eating and farming.

Therefore, I traveled to four different states and partnered with four different farms who identify with four different Christian denominations because I saw and still see them as the prophets and practitioners I needed to hear from to fill in the gaps of the current research. I desire to bring their stories to the table to demonstrate examples of reconciliation and resurrection. The four farms feature women of varying ages, from twenty-somethings to seventies, but there were

limits to the research. Only two of the seven interviewees were women of color, both from the same farm. The rest were white. This is actually a better percentage than the national average from the 2012 USDA Agricultural Census which states that 93% of women farm operators are white. But, this census did not count laborers or include narratives, so it is limited in terms of qualitative data. In the time I had and with exhausting my network, I ended up with the seven participants for this narrative inquiry study. In no way is this study essentializing their experiences as women farmers or making a statement about the “right way” to farm. Their experiences are reviewed here to bring their narratives to the table in a time in history when more diverse voices are needed.

The starting place for me in this research is not necessarily devastation. The statistics and research are available in many sources of what humans are doing to the earth. Climate change is real. This will not be debated in the pages that follow. Rising sea levels, soil degradation, species extinction, and dramatic weather events all point to shifts in what we are experiencing on earth. But rather than tune it out, become overwhelmed, or wait for the impending apocalypse, I wanted to meet people who are acting on behalf of their communities in very practical ways – growing food in connection to their faith. While I recognize lament and deconstruction are invaluable in this process, I want to dive into reconstruction in this research. The result is a movement from understanding life in segregated parts of history, spirituality, practical theology, God, and place to a deeper core which honors the intersections of place, relationship, and the Divine. A model I am calling Agricultural Spirituality in chapter ten looks at the processes of life, death, and resurrection in the areas of place, relationship, and God – merging these parts together in a deeper process. This model relies on historical foundations of Christian Spirituality and US history, but also presents itself in light of today’s practices of farming, ecofeminism, eating, and

spiritual discipline to bring hope to the ever-dire climate change headlines. It is my desire for faith communities to further connect faith, farming, and food as shown in the model in order to offer reconciliation and resurrection to, not only people, but the ecosystems around them. Understanding farmers' stories is only a starting place to this work, but these stories are the foundation and heart needed to move forward.

Therefore, this dissertation is argued in three parts. Part I. SOIL: Grounding and Gaps presents literature reviews in the fields of Practical Theology, Christian Spirituality, Ecofeminism, and US History of women farmers. The works reviewed provide a soil-of-sorts which has great organic material, but needs assistance as well. In this way, the theory and gaps are illustrated to ground the argument for subsequent chapters. Chapter one examines the disciplines, frameworks, and major themes of practical theology and spirituality as they discuss ecology and environment. Practical theology begins the discussion as it is dedicated to honoring theory and practice. As the different scholars approach the environment, the following themes emerge of transformation, treatment of neighbor, land care, economy of local, and spiritual practice. An understanding and critique of practical theology's positions point to the gaps this dissertation seeks to fill. Moving to discuss spirituality highlights this area as its own discipline, but also serves to provide a historical grounding. The argument then roots in a Christian understanding of the incarnation and embodied spirituality. The emerging area of spiritual ecology is mentioned in brief, only to move forward with a Christian framework. This is not because of a lack of value or even disagreement in the broader spiritual ecology dialogue, but to gain a stronger foundation in a Christian understanding of spiritual ecology. Chapter one ends, then, with the current scholars discussing spiritual formation, food, farming, and faith to begin to put in place themes for a more robust agricultural spirituality model presented in chapter ten.

Chapter two begins to fill in gaps from chapter one by providing an ecofeminist framework which speaks to the injustices in agriculture and theology. The chapter discusses a literature review of ecofeminist scholars, a critique of biocentrism, and a presentation of Carolyn Merchant's partnership ethics. The purpose of this chapter is to bring voices to the table not present in chapter one who champion the marginalized human and nonhuman populations. The authors argue for deconstructing dualisms and embracing intersubjective relationships housed in experience and context. The result is a robust conversation considering what compassionate ecofeminist practice and posture looks like alongside activism, the process of life and death, and sentience.

Building from Merchant's partnership ethic and the tenets of ecofeminism, an examination of the history and current conversation of US women farmers is needed. Chapter three investigates the history of the last 100 years of women in farming communities. Case studies of resilience in place and partnership are presented. Present-day news reports and academic journals are also explored presenting a lasting spirit of activism, leadership, and advocacy that remains today. Finally, a model of midwifery from Gloria Schaab is considered as an example of what an active role in mutuality, respect, and community looks like. Therefore, part one grounds this dissertation in theory, framework, and a model of application moving forward.

Part II. SEED: Narratives, the Methods and the Stories includes a discussion of the research method, how the data was collected and analyzed, and the original narratives of the farms in this study. These chapters are the new seed for the soil in part one. Chapter four details the qualitative methods used in this dissertation. Narrative Inquiry is the primary research method, but parts of Participant Action Research and Feminist Participant Research are needed



to create a method honoring of the participants. My experience of how I went about this research, analysis, and partnering with the farmers is discussed in chapter five. Chapters six through nine present the stories of each farm in this dissertation. Each of these narratives illustrates the results of using the research method and analysis of the data collected on each farm. They are told in a narrative format and the strongest themes and practices at each location are included. The result is a resilient picture of what agricultural spirituality looks like on four different farms, practiced in partnership with four different denominations.

The stories then merge together in Part III. ROOTS: A Model and Action Plan where common threads are pulled together to present an emerging model of agricultural spirituality in chapter ten. This model is needed as previous use of the concept has not been defined or articulated well. The strongest themes of God, place, and relationship combine to move from a segregated view of the world to an interconnected, rooted center where the process of life, death, and resurrection is honored. Each area of the model is discussed, not to show its distinctness, but to argue how it connects to the holistic, embodied experience of each farmer. The conclusion then borrows an Ignatian Examen practice from one of the farmers in the study called Thorns, Roses, and Buds. These components present areas needing advocacy, demonstrating hope, and give avenues of active justice for faith communities to be aware of in their localities. The model of agricultural spirituality is brought into the conversation showing it is not just a model for farms, but anyone who is willing to see soil, animals, plants, humans, and the Divine in powerful, interwoven ways. The concluding points demonstrate where there is soil and seed, roots can take on life in ways that can rebuild, reconcile, and resurrect even the driest of lands and souls. But we must be willing to do the work in our bodies alongside other bodies. The risks are great, but the hope is that this dissertation showcases how four farms are living into their

spiritual vocations as midwife farmers in deeper ways. They are participating in thoughtful spiritual practice, addressing injustice, using radical economic models, and providing nourishment using creative means. This dissertation is about them. It is about me. It is about us learning to work together for the benefit of the web of life.

Note about language: In this dissertation pronouns for God are used in the feminine except when quoting others. God is the term I chose to use most of the time for representing what is also known as “the Father” in Christianity. While “God” can be a problematic term for some, it is also the term the farmers in the study identified with most, so I chose to use God as the main term. In certain places, the use of the word “Divine” is used to represent the Spirit at work in the world and a more nuanced understanding of the work of the Trinity.

## PART I

### SOIL: GROUNDING AND GAPS

## Chapter 1

### Practical Theology, Spiritual Formation, Agriculture and the Environment:

#### The Theory Past and Present

I am driving away from my first farm visit, and I am in tears. I spent the day sharing stories and food and weeding nettles. I can feel their tiny pricks all over my body. The latex gloves did not hold up well. But the nettles did not bring on the tears. I am in the first trimester of my second pregnancy. My belly just beginning swelling with a new life. I spent the day in the fields hunched over or sitting in the dirt picking nettles and talking with ladybugs as I thought of the changes my life is undergoing. My pregnancy becomes a conversation topic as I share a lunch with Reyna, the farm manager, her husband Guadalupe, and another farmer, Jeanette. Reyna cannot help bringing up her four daughters and how she was working in the field when she was pregnant, too. One of her daughters has Down's Syndrome, she tells me. In her heart, she cannot help but believe her working in the fields contributed to her daughter's condition. Now is not the time for science or asking for proof of how she knows that. Now is the time to listen and be with these women in their experiences.

She brings up the tomato pickers in Florida – a story I will later learn about in great detail. Three women were pregnant together at the same time in the early 2000s. The company they worked for did not have proper pesticide protocol, storage, or warnings when the pesticides were sprayed. Now, I never met these women, but their stories stayed with me. One baby lived for three days after being born with one ear, no nose, a cleft palate, one kidney, and a host of other issues. Another of the babies had a jaw deformity, causing his tongue to choke him. He had

to be fed through a tube. And the last baby was born with no arms or legs.<sup>1</sup> Even though I do not know the science behind why these babies were born with these conditions, it does not take a scientist to figure out something happened to these women. It was easy to see how Reyna connected to these women. For a brief period of time, my story wove with theirs as well.

The day I learned these women's stories and part of Reyna's story overwhelms me. "I was just thinking about these women..." I pause and break down in my recorded notes. Tears stream down my face as I drive "...that do this every day and sacrifice their bodies and their children's lives in the womb to pick our food – it's unreal... There's just a lot of emotion in that. Just thinking about privilege and what privilege affords and how we're taking care of our children the best way we know how."<sup>2</sup> The "we" in that sentiment is these women and me and Reyna. They needed to work. I need to do my research – we're trying to provide for our families in the best way we know how. We are rooted in our experiences of work, faith, and family. Seemingly, none of these experiences are more important than the other. They collide, mesh, weave, and overlap.

It is here where my research intersects. The "it" and "here" are a kaleidoscope of women, food, farming, spiritual formation, practical theology, and justice. I traveled to four different faith-based farms, growing different food and raising different animals, in the name of four different Christian denominations. These farms are run by women. Their stories are untraditional, grounded, and disciplined. They demonstrate a different take on spirituality which will be examined in the pages to come.

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<sup>1</sup> Barry Estabrook, "Chemical Warfare: The Horrific Birth Defects Linked to Tomato Pesticides," *Ecologist*, September 1, 2011, accessed February 28, 2017, [http://www.theecologist.org/News/news\\_analysis/1033178/chemical\\_warfare\\_the\\_horrific\\_birth\\_defects\\_linked\\_to\\_tomato\\_pesticides.html](http://www.theecologist.org/News/news_analysis/1033178/chemical_warfare_the_horrific_birth_defects_linked_to_tomato_pesticides.html)

<sup>2</sup> Personal recording by author, March 2, 2016.

The fields of spiritual formation and practical theology discuss aspects of farming, food, and faith in various ways from the past few decades. The research in the past 50 years on theology and food gives us important reflections and scholarship in the works of people like Wendell Berry, Wes Jackson, Aldo Leopold, Larry Rasmussen, and Leonardo Boff among many others. Other scholars address their work in great detail. But, in order to nuance the conversation, I will not be addressing much of their work here. Instead, I will examine the fields of practical theology, spiritual ecology and formation, and the theology of food and farming to bring other voices to the table: women like Reyna. In doing so, I will make a case for a spiritual formation of land-based partnership rooted in agriculture; in other words, agricultural spirituality.

This chapter covers literature reviews in both disciplines of practical theology and spiritual formation where they pertain to ecological and environmental writings and exposes the gaps which this dissertation will address. I will then begin to create a theological and spiritual formation foundation from these fields to be developed in the later chapters of this dissertation. To undertake this task, by using thematic analysis, current frameworks are explored and critiqued in practical theology, and the field of spirituality, both historically and presently, will be considered as well. This will be done by detailing the work of Bridget of Kildare, Thomas Aquinas, Hildegard von Bingen, and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin to ground this work in the past as well as the present. The present will then be examined by taking a brief glimpse at spiritual ecology before further sinking into a Christian understanding and framework of merging spiritual formation, food, and faith with Sarah McFarland Taylor, Doug Christie, Norman Wirzba, and Fred Bahnson. Their work provides a preliminary framework assisting me in the formation of the model of agricultural spirituality in chapter ten. While the framework is shaped and molded by the continuation of voices from ecofeminism in chapter two and the historical context of US

women farmers in chapter three, the theological foundations remain vital to this research.

### **Practical Theology: A Transformational Framework of Caring for the Environment**

Practical theology is a field dedicated to theory and practice. For the last 100 years, thanks in part to Friedrich Schleiermacher, practical theology has explored the importance of experience, emotion, and dependence on God, giving value and scholarship to matters sometimes undervalued or undermined in the study of religion. What once was almost lost to dualistic thinking has been redefined in that theologians are able to appreciate theory and practice as no longer mutually exclusive. Richard Osmer understands this and to ground my definition of practical theology, I use his work along with Anton Boison, Fritjof Capra, and Bonnie Miller-McLemore. The starting place for my understanding comes from Boison's notion of practical theology as "living human documents."<sup>3</sup> Building from Boison, Osmer's four tasks are foundational to understanding human actions:

What is going on? (Descriptive-Empirical Task)

Why is this going on? (Interpretive Task)

What ought to be going on? (Normative Task)

How might we respond? (Pragmatic Task)<sup>4</sup>

It is important to Osmer to bring Fritjof Capra's ideas to these four tasks as well. Capra champions the embodiment of whole structures, patterns, and processes of renewal for the purposes of transforming entire systems.<sup>5</sup> If we ask, "What is going on?" and/or "Why is this going on?" etc. one must acknowledge there is more at hand than just human experience. Osmer

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<sup>3</sup> Richard Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2008), 16-17.

<sup>4</sup> Osmer, *Practical*, 4.

<sup>5</sup> Osmer, *Practical*, 16-17.

and Miller-McLemore agree on life experience in humans as only a starting place to recognize the larger web of life.<sup>6</sup> Miller-McLemore primarily views the “web” in political and liberationist ways, still rooted solely in human experience, but acknowledges practical theologians are also arguing for a web that considers ecological and contextual connections.<sup>7</sup> She admits the language of “web” is layered and can be problematic, but it is an important initial step by practical theologians to incorporate whole systems, webs, and patterns. With this lens, the case is made for the importance not only of humans as living documents, but extending the living document beyond human experience, something this dissertation argues for further in chapter ten.

Certainly, practical theologians are beginning to examine matters of environment and sustainability. The discipline appears to be in the initial stages of the discussion when one examines those who identify as practical theologians or write on practical theology. Narrowing in on the field of practical theology led me to the works of the following scholars: Ellen F. Davis, Jennifer Ayres, John Reader, Claire Wolfteich, John Weaver, Barbara Jo McClure, Dorothy Bass, Robert C.N. Kispert, and Paul H. Ballard. Five major themes emerge from the practical theology literature from these scholars through thematic coding and analysis.<sup>8</sup> The works demonstrate the core tenets of practical theology’s praxis of theory and practice in relation to ecological living. The themes are: theological frameworks, treatment of neighbor, land care,

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<sup>6</sup> Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 16-17.

<sup>7</sup> Bonnie J. Miller McLemore, *Christian Theology in Practice: Discovering a Discipline* (Cambridge: Eerdmans, 2012), 60-61.

<sup>8</sup> This focus on the field of practical theology is intentional as one might comment on the need to bring in liberation theology or religion and ecology scholars, noting their frameworks are indeed practical theology based. But the need to examine the discipline of practical theology by itself is vital to understanding what gaps exist in this discipline. Because of these limitations, thematic analysis emerged from Western Northern Hemisphere scholars namely from the Great Britain and the United States.



economy of local, and spiritual practice. The last theme, spiritual practice, brings to light a more nuanced conversation in which spirituality must be defined and further examined. But at the core of this chapter is a discussion of transformation that must be addressed before the themes.

### Transformational Pedagogy

The tenets of the field of practical theology merging with ecological issues present a two-fold transformation. The first is the recognition of transforming systems in the world. Attention is drawn to aspects of the transformation of globalized systems of power and marginalization, the role transformative grassroots movements are having all over the globe, and the reporting on the actual transformation of ecosystems on our planet. Secondly, the role of human transformation aiding or abetting either the health or degradation of the planet is examined. This is presented in the transformational stories in the literature as well as encouraging participation in transformative practices by both people and their communities.

In all of the following themes, there is an element of the descriptive-empirical because they each demonstrate “what is going on” from the point of view of these writers, but what is going on is namely *transformation*. Because either way, even in ignorance, our actions have immense transformative power. Ignorance is no longer connected to bliss because sooner or later, we will be forced to face environmental change. As Wolfeich asks, so do I: How are we risking transformation and carrying wisdom in our own experiences and contexts? How are we shaped when we truly engage in critical participatory ways?<sup>9</sup> To answer these inquiries, the authors’ works examined here could not come at a better or more urgent time. They take

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<sup>9</sup> Claire Wolfeich, "Animating Questions: Spirituality and Practical Theology," *International Journal of Practical Theology* 13, no. 1 (January 1, 2009): 137.

positions of hopefulness and resurrection amidst degradation pointing to a pedagogy of transformation.

### Theological Frameworks

Osmer describes the normative task as use of “theological concepts to interpret particular episodes, situations, or contexts constructing ethical norms to guide our responses, and learning from ‘good practice.’”<sup>10</sup> The theological frameworks and concepts presented here revolve around four general groundings of history, place, covenanted stewardship, and God’s ordered web of life. When considering what makes up a theology, Kispert encourages not discounting indigenous traditions and the forgotten legacies of the church in regards to living with creation. By valuing the historical wisdom of lost traditions, suppressed cultures, and marginalized voices, he believes practical theology can grow to incorporate ecological lenses.<sup>11</sup> Wolfteich wants to consider the location and ecological environment of historical contexts as part of the narratives and practices we learn from in the fields of practical theology and spirituality.<sup>12</sup> Nowhere is this idea evidenced more than in the work of Davis. The historical context of the Old Testament is pertinent to her work as she seeks to root the Bible as an agrarian text. It could be said after reading her work that one of the Bible’s main framing tools, if not *the* main framework, is agriculture.

Connected with historical context is the notion of place in the literature. Ecology is all about “place,” as the word comes from the Greek root, *oikos*, signifying “home” or “house.”

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<sup>10</sup> Osmer, *Practical Theology*, 4.

<sup>11</sup> Robert C.N. Kispert, “Practical Theology Focused on Eco-Justice” in *Theology for Earth Community: A Field Guide*, ed. Dieter T. Hessel (New York: Maryknoll, 1996), 196.

<sup>12</sup> Wolfteich, “Animating Questions,” 132.

Ayres' overarching framework is one of the table. The table invites us towards a new vision of intimacy, work, and equality in God's kingdom. It is a framework of presence rather than escape. Davis adds to this understanding using her exegesis of the Old Testament to present a piece of her agrarian framework as "serving the land." This means, not only must we gather at a table, but we also must acknowledge the ground beneath our feet in our homes. This land is something we were told to be stewards of because if we do not take care of it, it will not take care of us. Hence, the land and the table are connected *in place* because we need to examine the materialism on our tables, the tables themselves, and the ground on which they stand.

From this notion of place, considering the land and its cycles as foundational to theological frameworks, two authors explore the idea of covenant living as part of the discussion. Davis explains how land was passed from generation to generation between Israel. A mutual relationship of respect was forged between God, Israel, and the land having nothing to do with monetary value, but of stewardship. It was up to each family to care and bless the land and its creatures.<sup>13</sup>

A foundational covenantal framework means that humans need to care with God about the earth, not dominating it or becoming "world-creators."<sup>14</sup> Instead we should be stewards and co-creators in a world that is already created. The covenanted relationships must be stewarded in a framework of equality, though. A web of life outlook instead of a hierarchical stance helps shift the lens of domination to stewardship. Chapter two carries this conversation further with an ecofeminist framework as well.

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<sup>13</sup> Ellen F. Davis, *Scripture, Culture, and Agriculture: An Agrarian Reading of the Bible* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 40-41.

<sup>14</sup> John Weaver, "Co-Redeemers: A Theological Basis for Creation Care," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 36, no 2 (June 1, 2009): 204, 206.

Revisiting Ayres' framework of the table demonstrates this equality. We see that not only is the table about location, but it is also about the shape. She stresses roundness to signify equality with no one seated at the head. It must be a table of "hospitality and humanization" if we are to embody the theological values of Christ humbling himself to live on earth.<sup>15</sup> He does not choose a traditional hierarchy, as he did not come to reign with an army, nor does he rule in a totalitarian way, but reaches out to the most vulnerable and oppressed. This outreach needs to extend beyond just humans though. Weaver demonstrates that the order, or non-order, emerging from this table must be rooted in love, repentance, and forgiveness towards all life forms. This rooting is, in a sense, the biblical principle of Shalom which provides an ethic of healing coming from the collapse of hierarchical order.<sup>16</sup> Therefore, the imperative is to go forth then, not on a ladder, but on a fragile web where care of each other, no matter the life form, is paramount. The following pragmatic themes help shape what these conceptualizations of a theological framework look like in transformational, Shalom practice.

#### Treatment of Neighbor

Treatment of neighbor is the first theme highlighting pragmatic examples of how we might respond in the realm of practical theology and ecology. Two areas to engage when discussing neighbor are education and hospitality. "[Practices] of education and advocacy," Ayres writes, "have the capacity to deepen participants' understandings on interdependence, moral agency, and the responsibility to 'expand the table,' ensuring a space for farmers and laborers around the world."<sup>17</sup> Her research in Mexico redefined her notion of neighbor, leading

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<sup>15</sup> Jennifer Ayres, *Good Food: Grounded Practical Theology* (Baylor, TX: Baylor University Press, 2013), 56.

<sup>16</sup> Weaver, "Co-Redeemers," 205-206.

<sup>17</sup> Ayres, *Good Food*, 119.

her to desire the US to stop being “fixers” and start being guests in neighboring countries where we can listen, learn, and work alongside each other.

Education does not only concern global trade and relations though, but also national issues, too. In this way, Davis and Bass compel their audiences to examine the inhumane meat packing industry in the US and to look at the issues of neighbor in regards to the treatment of humans, migrant workers, and animals. Systems of oppression and low-wage earnings in no way embody hospitality. It is worth asking here: Do we consider our farmers and food laborers our neighbors? Do we know how much they are making and that small farms are hurting and losing their land? Are we aware farmer suicide is higher than ever in the US?<sup>18</sup> Education is power, but practical theology beckons us to examine what we do with that power.

If we choose to use the power we have to share and be hospitable – the second facet of this theme – this then utilizes the power in life-giving ways. Ballard speaks strongly of sharing power through introducing wealth limitations and reduction of living standards.<sup>19</sup> These so-called restrictions stem from a desire to see the gap close between the rich and poor – to be actual neighbors. Practices of limitation and restriction were not so alien in Biblical times as Davis reminds readers of the mandate to leave part of the harvest for the most dependent – a practice of sustaining neighbors.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ellen F. Davis, “Propriety and Trespass: The Drama of Eating,” in *Reading Genesis After Darwin*, ed. Stephen C Barton and David Wilkinson (New York: Oxford Univ Press, 2009): 205; Davis, *Scripture*, 104-105; Dorothy C. Bass, “Eating” in *The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Practical Theology*, ed. Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2014), 53.

<sup>19</sup> Paul H. Ballard, “Seven Billion and Counting,” *Practical Theology* 5, no 1 (April 1, 2012): 103.

<sup>20</sup> Davis, *Scripture*, 78.

By focusing on education and awareness moving into hospitality and sharing, stranger becomes neighbor in the world. In the context of practical theology praxis, this is important to see how we can learn and practice honorable treatment of neighbors in the midst of so many issues, but more so, so many life forms.

### Land Care

Aldo Leopold was aware of treatment of neighbor and the land containing multiple life forms when he made the idea of “land ethics” famous in *The Sand County Almanac*.<sup>21</sup> One would be hard pressed not to find references to Leopold’s writings from 1949 when considering what it means to live ethically in a degraded world. Indeed, his work is present in both Davis’ and Ayres’ books. Leopold’s philosophy is one of a circular view of the world where we are all wrapped together in a web of life as citizens caring for one another in aspects of life and death. Along with Leopold’s ethics, as well examining biblical reasoning, the literature discusses two aspects of caring for the land: non-violent interactions with and redemption of the land.

Ayres and Davis dedicate space to revisiting the idea of “stewardship” versus “dominion” in the Bible and how the latter word has been manipulated for violence. Specifically focused on are issues of extinction. In Genesis, God wanted the animals to multiply and flourish, so if that is part of our dominion, Davis argues, then we have turned our backs on creation due to the massive amounts of extinctions and degradation around us. Because we have now entered such an anthropocentric era of industrialization, Davis sees this as retreating to a man-centered universe instead of embracing a God-centered paradigm.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> For more information about his idea of land ethics see the chapter entitled “The Land Ethic” in Aldo Leopold’s *The Sand County Almanac* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949).

<sup>22</sup> Davis, *Scripture*, 76; Ayres, *Good Food*, 20, 118-119.

A God-centered world would consist of letting the soil and animals rest as Leviticus, Deuteronomy, and Isaiah command. We would focus on not reaping the edges of the fields in creative ways as already mentioned. However, in a nation of monoculture crops, the edges of the field are always reaped. Take Iowa for example. This state with its rich soil boasts the least amount of natural habitat of any state because of the amount of land taken up by agriculture.<sup>23</sup> Further, both Ayres and Davis give attention to genetically altered monoculture crops as a divisive topic of land care.<sup>24</sup> They emphasize we have not spent enough time on other less violent alternatives to genetic modification, like hybridization of the same species. All of this genetic manipulation is wrapped in the idea that humans feel they can dominate. But a way out of this is in the redemption of land care.

This redemption starts with examining what others are doing with land. Ayres spends time at Warren Wilson College<sup>25</sup>, a radically different liberal arts college, as well as in the urban centers of Chicago and Atlanta viewing urban gardening projects. Likewise, Davis visits Wes Jackson's Land Institute<sup>26</sup> in the Midwest getting to know young farmers as they learn

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<sup>23</sup> Susan Cosner, "Preserving Natural Habitat in Iowa" *Land Use Series*. Iowa State University. Feb. 2001, accessed December 7, 2017, <https://store.extension.iastate.edu/Product/pm1868a-pdf>

<sup>24</sup> Davis, *Scripture*, 80-81

<sup>25</sup> Warren Wilson College ([www.warren-wilson.edu](http://www.warren-wilson.edu)) The mission at this institution combines academics, service, and work on their on-campus farm. They dedicate themselves to environmental responsibility, cross-cultural understanding, and common good.

<sup>26</sup> The Land Institute was founded by Wes Jackson in 1976 with the vision of providing food and prairie without destroying ecosystems through educational programs and crop breeding. Their mission is: "When people, land, and community are as one, all three members prosper; when they relate not as members but as competing interests, all three are exploited. By consulting Nature as the source and measure of that membership, The Land Institute seeks to develop an agriculture that will save soil from being lost or poisoned, while promoting a community life at once prosperous and enduring." "Vision and Mission," The Land Institute Website, accessed December 7, 2017, [landinstitute.org/about-us/vision-mission](http://landinstitute.org/about-us/vision-mission).

sustainable ways of organic permaculture and growing techniques. She also discusses the revitalization of Detroit's landscape using urban agriculture.<sup>27</sup> Urban agriculture appears to be a strong force of redemption in city transformation for these two scholars. Furthermore, the redemption of the land comes in the form of retooling policies in the US farm bill. Allowances for women and minorities to get into agriculture more easily as well as the inclusion of organic and biodiverse environmentally aware farming methods are both in the bill, but those points are just a small portion of it in relation to the rest of the bill. Indeed, oftentimes cuts are made to these exact areas instead of large agricultural monocrop farms.<sup>28</sup>

Many of the sources discuss being spiritually aware of nature or recognizing the existence of farming techniques like organic or practicing permaculture. Terms are given like community gardening, urban agricultural, small farms, rotating crops, soil resting, and not using up resources. But little is explained about *what these terms actually mean*. We are told to shop at farmer's markets and try to live local, but again how does that work if access is an issue? Is it assumed everyone can do that? Not enough detail is given. It is also worth noting that not one of the authors talks about gardening or farming in their own lives. I wonder how the narratives and theory as well as the practices offered would expand and develop if actual farming was studied – the ecosystems, the animals, the seeds, the crops, the seasons – by practical theologians. For sure, there is room to grow (pun intended).

### Economy of Local

Quite possibly the largest pragmatic solution can be summarized in the barrage of suggestions regarding the revitalization of local economies. My choice of "Economy of local" as

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<sup>27</sup> Davis, *Scripture*.

<sup>28</sup> Ayres, *Good Food*, 45-46.



a theme versus “Local economy” is intentional as local economy is too often thought of solely as where citizens choose to shop instead of how resources are managed holistically. The word “economy” has the same root as ecology: house. Quite literally, it stems from managing households. If we are to think of economy today in terms of Western culture, some have drifted far from thinking of an economy of home or a home dedicated to being local where each house seeks to grow, produce, and share with their neighbors as well as limit waste.

All three books reviewed here (Ayres, Reader, and Davis) include globalization as a, if not *the*, major problem. Trade (namely NAFTA), large farming, and money are the key issues addressed. The globalized economy champions food as a product to be grown cheaply instead of for health or culture.<sup>29</sup> Because of the US virtue of frugality instead of care, Davis mentions the state of farm towns being deserted in the names of survival and profit rather than valuing sustainability. Small farms are more beneficial for local economies and provide vocations, but small farms can be more expensive to run and support when produce is being shipped all over the world for less, ironically.<sup>30</sup>

The world is not better off in this process either. Ayres lays out what NAFTA has done for countries like Mexico. Mexico is a culture that has survived on their local corn for centuries, but due to cheap corn imports from the US, Mexican farmers are struggling. Local economies and cultures in Mexico are changing. Additionally, because of NAFTA policies, alongside the World Bank’s mandates of countries growing one crop for export in exchange for development funds, some are descending deeper into poverty. And US Food Aid is not helping the problem as they flood countries in crisis with supplemental food they could grow themselves.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Ayres, *Good Food*, 28-30.

<sup>30</sup> Davis, *Scripture*, 104-105.

Reader adds to this case by warning, again, the way things have been cannot continue. He argues that practical theology must take living patterns seriously and consider climate change a vital issue to engage.<sup>32</sup> He does not say what actions we should take though, other than being aware. Others provide more concrete examples of how this shift to local would happen such as supporting Farmland Trusts, farmer's markets, and Community Supported Agriculture.

Grounding her reasons for local in the Psalms and Proverbs, Davis calls for collapsing systems to move towards "life within a radically different kind of social and economic system, one that might truly be called 'community.'" Perhaps one of her stronger cases is reevaluating the woman of Proverbs 31. She points out this is not solely a passage about being a wife, but a woman standing up to the status quo. The narrative contains a woman running a healthy family farm in a time where this would not have been looked at with favor as she is challenging the economic system of the day. This counter-cultural work she does is furthered by the fact that she plans a field, which can only be done with her indigenous knowledge from living in community. The work she is doing is good work – it is local work.<sup>33</sup>

Shifting to present day, McClure takes on the business world as being a realm practical theology needs to partner with more often to challenge the status quo. Her article is not intentionally ecologically focused. But that is what is so interesting about it. Speaking of her work with companies who underwent shifts to embrace more meaningful (and she would argue theological) work models, her examples are solely environmentally ethical business prototypes.

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<sup>31</sup> Ayres, *Good Food*, 117-136.

<sup>32</sup> John Reader, *Reconstructing Practical Theology: The Impact of Globalization* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), 4.

<sup>33</sup> Davis, *Scripture*, 139-154.

Her use of Interface Corporation and Clif Bar, Inc. showcase their efforts toward limiting waste, decreasing their carbon footprints, treating their employees fairly, and processing with sustainable materials. Her demonstration of these companies who can “do well by doing good” is ripe with Osmer’s pragmatic task.<sup>34</sup> It should not be overlooked that the heads of these companies, in attending to the soul of their workplaces, saw the way to do good, theological work was to automatically realign their environmental ethics. Economy might not be local in everything these companies do, but it certainly is ecological.

What is noteworthy is that practical theologians are speaking up on these issues. They are calling out injustices and wanting to see more sustainable systems revolving around local ideals. But the shifts that must occur involve recognizing how systemic some people’s spending habits are – how do you convince someone to spend a few more dollars on eggs? Those dollars can go to buying more food or material items. Western society teaches that less is more, but not in the matter of consumption. Rather, frugality is championed in that, as stores like Walmart market, rollbacks and price deductions mean one is able to buy more for less. Most of the authors in this chapter are silent on how exactly to shift the system in the hearts of people and in their wallets, unless they are already connected to some form of farming or gardening movement.

Supporting farmers, buying local, and campaigning for more just policies at home all sound like amazing ideas. Certainly, they can inspire practice. However, Bass’s question has a deep sense of the morality, complexity, and privilege of engaging this topic when she asks, “Are my table companions and I simply ‘foodies,’ privileged diners whose delight in a good meal overwhelms our sense of justice?”<sup>50</sup> It is one thing to make a case for an economy of local, but it

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<sup>34</sup> Barbara J. McClure, "Pastoral Theology as the Art of Paying Attention: Widening the Horizons." *International Journal of Practical Theology* 12, no 2 (January 1, 2008): 206-208.

<sup>50</sup> Bass, “Eating,” 54.

is worth asking *who* is allowed to participate in this system if it is indeed the way forward? Laborers, farmers, and every-day citizens are facing huge challenges when it comes to providing for their families. This is something practical theologians need to explore with more research. Certain people need to buy the cheap eggs and not feel morally guilty for just being able to put some sort of food on the table. But this speaks to a larger divisive issue of who gets to eat healthy in the US.

The farmers in this study explore this gap more thoroughly in their practices as they seek to find hope in the systems of local, equitable, and sustainable living. They all wrestle with questions of survival, neighbor engagement, supporting their employees, and interacting with their communities. Food is the central part of their missions and how they go about producing it matters. Profit came up only inasmuch as a means to survive – it was not a core value for any of them. In other words, they understood they needed to make a profit to live, but none were seeking excess. The four farms represented here are the stories I did not see in the literature – farms who were struggling to survive or choosing to stay small instead of grow; they were farms living into something deeper, and I wanted to know what that was.

### Spiritual Practice

The last theme of spiritual practice attends to this deeper, grounded look at farming and ecological living. Spiritual practice and theory in the hands of practical theologians point to contemplation connected to just action by employing reflexivity. By understanding how images of God can be seen in creation, thresholds can be crossed from imagination to movement, according to Reader.<sup>35</sup> This threshold of transformation continues through Weaver's use of

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<sup>35</sup> Reader, *Reconstructing*, 14.

Matthew 16:24 as a lifestyle praxis. He draws out both deep reflections on the text and implementing action:

*Deny self:* Live more simply, use less of the world's resources, and treat the created order with care.

*Take up the cross:* Live sacrificially for the sake of others, give up our greed, and sacrifice our wants.

*Follow Jesus:* See the created world as an expression of God's order and love, see everyone as equally valued by God, take special care of the poor and the outcast, and love our neighbors as ourselves.<sup>36</sup>

Another angle he presents to build on this verse is Jurgen Moltmann's notions of "mutually indwelling" in community with the Trinity. Contemplating relationship in this fashion leads to practices of Eucharist and repentance in order to understand the redemption of the world and our role in its degradation and restoration. The recognition of this symbiotic relationship allows for continual awareness of our roles in the world and how Eucharist nourishes us and provides motivation for our actions – something I will return to when discussing historical figures like Hildegard von Bingen and Thomas Aquinas. Returning to the table each week to restore our souls hopefully leads to understanding more about unification in the world as the Eucharist table is the great equalizer where we all, rich and poor, receive the same sacraments.

Understanding this lens can then move us out from the table into healing practices which can be spiritual, too. Some examples here would be assessing our ecological footprints and examining our use of fossil fuels, water, resources, and trade policies.<sup>37</sup> The healing comes when we recognize the role of sin in these issues and do something about it. As Davis so eloquently records young farmers saying, "When humans are not in touch with God, the soil will be the first to suffer."<sup>38</sup> Taking a moment to witness degradation and our role in it is hard, but in doing so,

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<sup>36</sup> Weaver, "Co-Redeemers," 214.

<sup>37</sup> Weaver, "Co-Redeemers," 213.

we acknowledge suffering around the world. Suffering is also recognized in the sustenance of Eucharist. Being fed by a once-broken, now-restored body then becomes an embodied spiritual practice of working with the hurting earth towards its own restoration through repentance and just action.

Along with the notion of sin and Eucharist, Sabbath also surfaces as a vital contemplative practice full of meaning. Both Weaver and Davis emphasize this observation of rest as a needed reminder of God's provision and our need to depend on God. In recognition of God's promise to complete his work, we need to stop our own. In halting our work, we should celebrate Sabbath as a practice "free from the chains of ownership and consumerism," making room for attending.<sup>39</sup> McClure's notion of "attending" fits well here as she says attending and tenderness have to be wed together to see persons (and, I argue, ecosystems) in suffering, to discern where God is in creation and to listen in the midst of it all for the small voice of God.<sup>40</sup> Her practice is one of paying close attention to the tensions surrounding us while utilizing empathy. The farmers in chapters six through nine demonstrate a strong understanding of this idea. Listening for God and attending to what is around us are vital components of spiritual practice. However, a wider lens on spirituality is needed to not just see this as a "practice," but to examine spirituality in light of ecology in its own right.

Before doing so, a note must be made about the disciplines of practical theology and spirituality. The two fields are sometimes contested with some arguing practical theology and spirituality should be linked together, with spirituality being a subset of practical theology or if

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<sup>38</sup> Davis, "Propriety," 213.

<sup>39</sup> Weaver, "Co-Redeemers," 207.

<sup>40</sup> McClure, "Pastoral Theology," 190-191.

they should be separate fields.<sup>41</sup> Practical theology is a field dedicated to theory and practice. The desire of scholars in the discipline is to bring God's presence and the work of the Divine to the forefront of vocation and practice. As seen above, spiritual practice fits nicely in the five major themes. However, as mentioned, spirituality has more nuance than just practice. Yes, it is the practice of attuning one's self to God in world, but it is also about embodying that presence. This process can be in the world or in a text, but it is its own discipline as it undertakes these examinations and explorations. Because of their complimentary nature, I argue practical theology and spirituality should be linked, but not in a hierarchical fashion with spirituality as a subset. Rather these two areas compliment each other. They both have distinct areas of scholarship that overlap. As mentioned, this chapter will give attention to both fields where they concern ecology and sustainability, which I will now attend to in the spirituality literature. This chapter will then end in grounding itself with a definition of spiritual formation from a foundation of both practical theology and spirituality.

### **Grounded Incarnational Spirituality: The Past**

As a starting point, the spiritual practices mentioned in the practical theology section of just action, Eucharist, and Sabbath are strong entryways into seeing the Divine working in the

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<sup>41</sup> On this debate see Claire Wolfteich, "Spirituality" in *The Wiley Companion to Practical Theology*, ed. Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore, 328-336 (Malden, MA: Wiley Blackwell, 2014). Wolfteich articulates this further, making a case for spirituality to stand on its own. She argues it is an interdisciplinary field "drawing upon scholarship in theology, biblical studies, ethics, history, psychology, sociology, neurobiology, feminist studies, ritual studies, literary criticism, and aesthetics" (333). She writes spirituality should be viewed as a partner, not a subset of practical theology. She continues her case in her book *Invitation to Practical Theology: Catholic Voices and Visions* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2014). There she discusses spirituality and theology must be united for without each other they become either overly fundamental or overly sentimental (85). She outlines the necessity for this conversation writing she wants spirituality to influence the theological character of practical theology through embracing liberative and socially transformative experiences while "carefully studying and deconstructing mysticism's oppressive social construction" (338). Spirituality compliments practical theology; it does not take away from it. Spirituality also has interfaith capacities practical theology needs and could use to engage in various cultures, especially as institutional religion declines (340).

created world whether in times of lament or resurrection and restoration. However, to only address the last ten years of scholarship would be to miss an important foundation when it comes to theologians and saints who saw God in their midst and challenged perfunctory understandings of God in their time. Bridget of Kildare, Thomas Aquinas, Hildegard von Bingen and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin provide in depth examinations which aid in my definition of spirituality. Their work revolves around Christ's role on the earth. The world around them is something to learn from instead of escape. They also focus on aspects of relationship with bodies and experiences, rooted in a Trinitarian lens. Ultimately, this relationship focus leads to an encompassing focus on a circular, centered view of life, rather than a line with a beginning and end. Their scholarship welcomes the mysterious and gives attention to the energy in the material world. They do not see Christ as separate from the world or above it. The foundation of the circular view stems from Christ being Incarnate. This Christological, circular view, grounded in the earth, then unfolds in rejecting dualisms and a redefining of the sacred feminine. Their arguments are still taught and exemplified today as they are rooted in the scripture, life experience, and in the world around us.

The field of spirituality can be characterized on a spectrum where study of spirituality leans towards the examination of texts on one side or being a solely mystical, other-worldly experiences on the other side. For example, seasoned scholars such as Bernard McGinn and Sandra Schneiders write from the lens of examining scripture and historical documents in spiritual formation.<sup>42</sup> On the other end, the spiritual understanding of those such as Ignatius of

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<sup>42</sup> Examples of their work in this area include Sandra Schneiders, *Women and the Word: The Gender of God in the New Testament and the Spirituality of Women* (Notre Dame, IN: Saint Mary's College, 1986); Sandra Schneiders, *Jesus Risen in Our Midst: Essays on the Resurrection of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel* (Collegeville, MN: Michael Glazier Book, 2013); Bernard McGinn, *The Foundations of Mysticism: Origins to the Fifth Century* (New York: Crossroad Publishing, 1991).



Loyola has a tendency of escaping the violence and natural consequences of this world. This, in particular, is Teilhard's critique of Ignatius – that Ignatius is focused on self and imagination, not the rest of creation. Teilhard, instead, focuses on creation, incarnation, and redemption as these aspects are unified in Christ.<sup>43</sup> This shift of focus is what makes Teilhard, as well as Bridget, Hildegard, and Aquinas, unique in the area of spirituality. All four do not focus on the ascension, but on this circular idea of the world being born in Christ, the world in Christ, and the world being redeemed through Christ's death and resurrection. The Incarnation is paramount.

Examining John 1:1-5 NRSV is helpful here as there is another way to understand the Word in the World: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." Hildegard understands this idea of the Word being the source of creation and unification. She writes in the *Scivias*, "For the Supernal Word, Who excels every creature, showed that they all are subject to Him and draw their strength from His power, when He brought forth from the universe the different kinds of creatures, shining in their miraculous awakening,...; until each creatures was radiant with the loveliness of perfection, beautiful in the fullness of their arrangement in higher and lower ranks, the higher made radiant by the lower and the lower by the higher."<sup>44</sup> Despite the connections to the hierarchy of the day, Hildegard is caught up with, her desire is to see that "the Father is manifested by the Son, the Son by the birth

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<sup>43</sup> Robert Faricy, *The Spirituality of Teilhard de Chardin* (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1981), 45.

<sup>44</sup> Hildegard of Bingen, *Scivias*, trans. Columba Hart and Jane Bishop, *The Classics of Western Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1990), 2.1.6.

of creatures and the Holy Spirit by the Incarnation of the Son.”<sup>45</sup> Hildegard sees visions of restoration and sees Christ being sent from God not to be divided, but to bear fruit and quench thirst.<sup>46</sup> To her, the Incarnation restores frailty and creation. This is seen in the third book in the *Scivias*, in her twelfth vision of creation calming through the Incarnation of the world.

Aquinas echoes these ideas using Paul’s words from 2 Cor. 3:3: “Gospel written ‘not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablet of stone, but on tablet of flesh, on hearts.’”<sup>47</sup> Christ’s words were meant to be mediated through people for people which is why Aquinas points out Christ did not write down his teachings himself. If Christ would have written them down, it could have erred on the side of being too individualistic to a certain person. Through Christ’s Incarnation in the world, we can see his demonstration of love and intimate friendship. Relationship is at the focus of this lens – relationships rooted in the world. Therefore, Aquinas emphasizes the Incarnation as a foundation to union with God revolving around grace. This grace means that just by existing, humans are an extension of the Incarnation. When humans are not united to the Word, then faith is uprooted and removed.<sup>48</sup> In other words, since the Word is the beginning of creation, the image of the Word is wrapped up in the creation of humans and the world. As such, humans need to cooperate with God through grace because the aim is re-creation which should be anchored in conforming to Christ.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup>Hildegard of Bingen, *Scivias*, II.2.2, in *Women Mystics in Medieval Europe* by Emilie Zum Brunn and Georgette Epiney-Burgard, trans. Sheila Hughes (New York: Paragon House), 14.

<sup>46</sup> Hildegard, *Scivias*, Classics of Western, 2.1.11.

<sup>47</sup> Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Christ and Spirituality in St. Thomas Aquinas* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2011), 164.

<sup>48</sup> Bernard McGinn, *Thomas Aquinas's "Summa Theologiae": A Biography* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2014), 110.

<sup>49</sup> Torrell, *Christ and Spirituality*, 120.

Furthering this discussion, Teilhard wants to move everything having to do with science and matter into union with Christ. He writes, “Personal relationships with Jesus Christ, the relationship at the basis of all lived Christianity is a relationship in and through matter, in and through the world.”<sup>50</sup> Whether it is giving away one’s possessions to make the world a better place or focusing on the Word as the source of living things, it is clear everything begins and ends and begins again with Christ as the focus. Christ becomes an element in the world through the Incarnation. It should be noted the argument here is not one of pantheism. Christ is not fused into the tree or the soil, but instead these scholars are championing panentheism.<sup>51</sup> The world is sacred because it is created and depends on God. The world is not worshipped, but what we know of God, we know from our interactions in this place.

Brigit’s interactions are helpful in illustrating this panentheistic point. We do not know a lot about her, but what we do know from her hagiography is how the story of her life was interpreted to reflect Christ. Such examples include when she hangs her cloak on a sunbeam and when she parts rivers for miracles to occur.<sup>52</sup> While these things may seem miraculous and radical, the focus here is the landscape (and in other stories, the animals) around her as sacred and having power in Christ. This is significant because usually when the Roman church claimed a territory, there were buildings to claim in the name of Christ. But, because there were no structures or monuments the church could claim in Ireland, landscape and other natural wonders

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<sup>50</sup> Faricy, *Spirituality*, 40.

<sup>51</sup> A more detailed discussion on panentheism and its definition is found on page 49.

<sup>52</sup> Cogitosus, “The Life of St. Brigit the Virgin,” quoted in Oliver Davies, *Celtic Spirituality* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1999), 125.

became holy in the sight of the church.<sup>53</sup> Therefore, the heart of her hagiography bridges Christ to what was an already vibrant culture and uniting nature to hospitality, mercy, and miracles. The life of Brigit continues this view of Christ infused in the world.

This infusion of Christ in the world – the Word in the world – represents a breaking down of dualisms, especially as we see the created human immersed in a world where both humans and matter reflect Christ. By bringing the body and soul together in relation to the ecosystem around them, the conversation of incarnational spirituality takes on a richer lens by connecting earth, body, and spirit. Seeing Christ reflected in the world is a different view than the long-held perspective of men who according to Teilhard “crudely contrasted soul and body, spirit and flesh, as good and evil.”<sup>54</sup> Long before Rene Decartes advocated a dualistic lens, Aquinas preached a holistic way of viewing the human experience. In the *Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis* (QDSC) he writes, “no part has the perfection of its nature when it is separated from [its] whole. And so, since the soul is a part of human nature, it does not have the perfection of its nature except in union with the body... And so, although the soul can exist and intellectually cognize when it is separated from the body, nonetheless it does not have the perfection of its natures when it is separated from the body.”<sup>55</sup> The way to be human, according to Aquinas, is integrating body and soul. The two must work together. Ecofeminist voices to be explored in the next chapter champion this idea, too, in order to add to the argument.

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<sup>53</sup> Lisa Bitel, *Landscape with Two Saints: How Genovefa of Paris and Brigit of Kildare Built Christianity in Barbarian Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 98-99.

<sup>54</sup> Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Divine Milieu: An Essay on the Interior Life* (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, 1957), 105.

<sup>55</sup> *Quaestio disputata de spiritualibus creaturis* (QDSC) un. 2 ad 5 in Eleonore Stump, *Aquinas* (London: Routledge, 2003), 201.

What this foundation of unifying the body and soul demonstrates is that the human in and of herself is not bad or good, but because of free will, our appetites, virtues, and desires are linked to our passions and senses. The point is to connect habitus (freedom) to goodness in order to work towards God's will for happiness.<sup>56</sup> Teilhard expands this idea further stating, "we must not forget that the human soul, however independently created our philosophy represents it as being, is inseparable, in its birth and in its growth, from the universe into which it is born. In each soul, God loves and partly saves the whole world which that soul sums up in an incommunicable and particular way."<sup>57</sup>

The way this is lived out is through what Aquinas represents as appetite and senses, what Hildegard calls sight and not feeling, and perhaps, in what is one of the most powerful statements of Teilhard, albeit ripe in simplicity, "To think, we must eat."<sup>58</sup> Even though Brigit's work is not specifically highlighted in this idea, her miracles of multiplying food and caring for the poor around her demonstrate that she cared about the human experience as well. Starting with the self is not about ego or individualism, though. The body is a tool of self-discipline, merged with the soul and senses, that have been active, as Hildegard points out, since a person's inhabitation in the womb: "For the soul emanates the senses. How? It vivifies a person's face and glorifies him with sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch, so that by this touch he becomes watchful in all things. For the senses are a sign of all the powers of the soul, as the body is the vessel of the

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<sup>56</sup> Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Aquinas's Summa: Background, Structure, and Reception* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 32.

<sup>57</sup> Teilhard, *Divine Milieu*, 60.

<sup>58</sup> Nicholas E. Lombardo, *The Logic of Desire: Aquinas on Emotion* (Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2011), 23; Caroline Walker Bynum, preface to *Scivias* by Hildegard of Bingen, *The Classics of Western Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1990), 5; and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Phenomenon of Man* (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), 64.

soul.”<sup>59</sup> The purpose of being watchful is to think about God and discover truth.<sup>60</sup> To be alive and to be reflective is a symbiotic relationship of which humans are gifted. As Hildegard writes, “Therefore whoever has knowledge in the Holy Spirit and wings of faith, let this one not ignore My admonition but taste it, embrace it, and receive it in his soul.”<sup>61</sup> To be rooted in human experience is the way to ground lives, but also discover how God reveals the core of Incarnational spirituality.

This Incarnational spirituality is further manifested in how these scholars and saints incorporate and see nature around them. Not only is the human experience rooted in and inseparable from the world, but the way they discuss creation and matter is vital in this conversation. This is apparent to Hildegard when she writes in the *Scivias* book 2, vision 6, chapter 37, as she hears from the Lord:

I the Father am present to every creature and withdraw Myself from none; but you, O human, do withdraw yourself from creatures. For instance, when you look into water, your face appears in it, but your reflection can exercise none of your powers, and when you turn away you no longer appear in the water. But I do not appear to creatures thus changeably; I am present to them in a true manifestation, never withdrawing My power from them but doing in them by the strength of My will whatever I please. And so too I truly display My majesty in the sacrament of the body and blood of My Son, and wondrously perform My miracles there from the beginning of the priest’s secret words until the time when that mystery is received by the people.<sup>62</sup>

The vision displays aspects of Incarnational spirituality at the heart of Hildegard in that God is present with creatures on earth, in the elements of creation, and in the sacraments and practices of remembering Christ for the purpose of redemption. Hildegard incorporates animals, minerals,

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<sup>59</sup> Hildegard, *Scivias*, Classics of Western, 1.4.24.

<sup>60</sup> McGinn, *Thomas*, 46.

<sup>61</sup> Hildegard, *Scivias*, Classics of Western, 1.1.6.

<sup>62</sup> Hildegard, *Scivias*, Classics of Western, 2.6.37.

and plants into her other vocational works, but also discusses the earth in her visions in revolutionary ways. Her visions are represented in flames, clouds, starless skies, and many other allusions to the world. Because humans were created from dust, Hildegard understands persons to be intertwined with creation. She writes of man, “so entangled with the strengths of the rest of creation that he can never be separated from them; for the elements of the world, created for Man’s service, wait on him, and Man, enthroned as it were in their midst, by divine disposition presides over them.”<sup>63</sup> The presiding is not one of domination though. Hildegard often speaks of *caritas* and represents this virtue as a primordial virgin. Caritas is used to explain that creation is united with love in that the Word spoke everything into existence. Charity, Humanity, and Peace oversee the living fountain of life.<sup>64</sup> Her work emphasizes all creation is in the mind of God and humans bear a certain responsibility to “lead the body along the right path towards Good” on this earth.<sup>65</sup>

Aquinas roots this work in the connection of the goodness and essence of God to everything else. As McGinn explains, “[Aquinas’s] God-centered, Trinitarian perspective is situated against the background of the cyclical movement of all creation, which finds in God alone its absolute origin and its final end.”<sup>66</sup> At the heart of Aquinas’s view on creation is the notion of essence, then. Creation flows from God, therefore it is good. The flow of creation is to return to the Divine. But knowing and understanding God completely is still outside of human

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<sup>63</sup> Hildegard, *Scivias*, Classics of Western, 1.3.16.

<sup>64</sup> Barbara Newman, *Sister of Wisdom: St. Hildegard’s Theology of the Feminine* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 52.

<sup>65</sup> Zum Brunn and Epiney-Burgard, *Women Mystics*, 12-13.

<sup>66</sup> McGinn, *Thomas*, xviii.

limitations. So Aquinas explains these connections through essence, as McGinn demonstrates,

Every being whose essence is not its existence—that is, every being that does not need to exist—must have its existence caused by a being that necessarily exists... the relations of possibility and actuality in creatures are rooted in a deeper distinction, namely, the difference between the God who must be, because what he is is nothing other than his existence, and all other things, which need not have been, but have been called into being by God’s creative will.”<sup>67</sup>

In other words, because God is not an object humans can understand, the Divine is known through creation.

Similarly, Teilhard’s letters call the infusing of God in the world the “science of Christ running through all things.”<sup>68</sup> He argues the soul of humans is connected to the soul of the earth. Teilhard was deeply connected to the world as he spent his life studying theology in conjunction with paleontology and geography. As his biographer details, he constantly felt called by the past into the future because of his work with the world around him: “It was as if all creation consisted of a continuous stream of living matter, energy, and spirit, a cosmic web animated by divine life itself.”<sup>69</sup> His work revolves around the concepts of humans in creation, but he still sees the interrelationships around him in a similar way to Aquinas. In his own words, he explains, “More remarkable still, all living creatures, from the humblest bacteria to man, contain exactly the same complicated types of vitamins and enzymes, notwithstanding the great range of chemical forms possible... Surely such similarity of living substance in dispositions which do not seem necessary suggests an early choice or sorting.”<sup>70</sup> One can see similarities to Darwin here in that if

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<sup>67</sup> McGinn, *Thomas*, 83.

<sup>68</sup> Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Letters of a Traveler*, (London: Collins, 1962), 85, in Ursula King, *Spirit of Fire: The Life and Vision of Teilhard de Chardin* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2001), 103.

<sup>69</sup> King, *Spirit*, 32.

<sup>70</sup> Teilhard, *Phenomenon*, 95.



one takes a closer look at evolution, it is not a study in chance, but in cooperation and relationship.

Brigit's stories further this idea highlighting an affinity for animals as well as a spirituality driven by the land. Her role as a saint invested in fertility of the earth stems from her legends connecting her to animals. She has a particular connection to cows starting in her youth, and she sought out a special white cow with red ears to milk. From there, she uses her gifts to take care of more animals and, as she did, she also helped the poor.<sup>71</sup> Even today, it is thought that water from her holy wells around Ireland will help cure cattle.<sup>72</sup> Because of her story, Brigit is remembered in a festival focused on agriculture inviting Brigit to intercede on behalf of the seeds so the harvest will be blessed.

The Incarnation is not only seen in the world around these scholars and saints, but also in practice. They discuss tradition and ritual often, finding solace and discernment in the practices of the church. There are a handful of practices and sacraments mentioned in their works, but the most prominent is Eucharist. Eucharist comes together to represent so many of the ideas discussed here. The unification of earth and spirituality is realized in this practice as elements are grown of the earth, imparted to humans as a gift and reminder, and returned to earth while pointing to it and beyond it. Aquinas argues the role of any sacrament is to signify and symbolize something beyond itself. There is no power in the actual sacrament; the power is in the relationship to the sacrament. It is a reminder of a process of sanctification and grace found in the greatest sacrament: Christ.<sup>73</sup> Further, for Aquinas, Eucharist and community are connected

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<sup>71</sup> Sean O'Duinn, *The Rites of Brigid: Goddess and Saint* (Dublin: Columba Press, 2013), 10, 22.

<sup>72</sup> E.G. Bowen, "The Cult of Saint Brigit" in *Studia Celtica* 8, no. 9.1 (Winter, 1973), 34.

<sup>73</sup> Torrell, *Aquinas's Summa*, 59-60.

because it is offered to all people.<sup>74</sup> Matter and animated humanity come together in a powerful way.

It is possible Aquinas arrived at his understanding of Eucharist through Hildegard as Newman determines, his words on Eucharist, and transubstantiation specifically, are almost identical to hers.<sup>75</sup> Hildegard explains the wonderment of Eucharist when she writes, “The human soul, which is invisible, invisibly receives the sacrament, which exists invisibly in that oblation, while the human body, which is visible, visibly receives the oblation that visibly embodies that sacrament.”<sup>76</sup> In other words, there is something visible and invisible happening, as a representation of God dwelling in humanity and the earth. It is not a matter of real flesh and blood, but a matter of remembering salvation and Christ in the elements and in the people. Part of that remembrance is when she advocates for water being present at the Eucharist table for the sake of Trinity. Three elements need to be represented: Wine, bread, and water. They honor Christ in that they are elements of the world and of himself as when he was on the cross and speared, both water and blood were drawn.<sup>77</sup>

Brigit does not discuss Eucharist specifically, but it is important to mention her feast day. On February first, as a sign of spring impending, the people of Ireland celebrate Brigit as an intercessor of fertility and harvest. This ritual synthesizes a church tradition with farming communities in the country.<sup>78</sup> Farmers disconnected from church sometimes even perform rites

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<sup>74</sup> Torrell, *Aquinas's Summa*, 61.

<sup>75</sup> Barbara Newman, introduction to *Scivias* by Hildegard of Bingen, *The Classics of Western Spirituality* (New York: Paulist Press, 1990), 33.

<sup>76</sup> Hildegard, *Scivias*, *Classics of Western*, 2.6.14.

<sup>77</sup> Hildegard, *Scivias*, *Classics of Western* 2.6.31.

<sup>78</sup> O'Duinn, *Rites*, 20.

for the cattle in conjunction with Brigit's feast day.<sup>79</sup> There are specific foods eaten, such as mashed potatoes from a pot resting on rushes. Petitions are made to Brigit to welcome her and request her intercession to God for the agricultural community, humans, seeds, and animals alike.<sup>80</sup> My point is not to say this is Eucharist, but it is a gathering to remember the earth, its members (humans, plants, animals, minerals), and the Trinity. All of these aspects are wrapped together. To remember one is to recognize the other; therefore, this feast has Eucharistic qualities.

Teilhard's understanding of Eucharist was one of mystery that the "Lord came to put on, save and consecrate: holy matter."<sup>81</sup> He continues, "the incarnation, realized, in each individual through the Eucharist. All of the communions of a life-time are one communion. All the communions of [humans] now living are one communion. All the communions of all [humans], present, past, and future are one communion...humanity assimilates the material world, and as the Host assimilates our humanity, the Eucharistic transformation goes beyond and completes the transubstantiation of the bread on the altar."<sup>82</sup> All of the communions of a life-time are one communion. It is worth repeating. Jesus is present just as much in the Eucharist Hildegard partook in as the one I will take on Sunday. The elements are part of the mystery, humans are part of it, and so is God. In this way, the historical foundations of Christian spirituality as they are connected to the earth are important to realize.

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<sup>79</sup> O'Duinn, *Rites*, 54.

<sup>80</sup> O'Duinn, *Rites*, 98.

<sup>81</sup> Teilhard, *Divine Milieu*, 106.

<sup>82</sup> Teilhard, *Divine Milieu*, 124-125. Teilhard's references to "man" changed to [human] by author to make it more inclusive.

### The Present Part I: Spiritual Ecology

Certainly though, Christianity is not alone in recognizing these connections. Spiritual ecology is a newer field dedicated to action and contemplation in the world. Scholars in this area recognize the power of spirituality and ecology in relationship to one another and not as a subset to theology. It is important to note much of the field of spiritual ecology is pluralistic and animist. The field pulls from many backgrounds and religions. For example, in the book *Spiritual Ecology: A Quiet Revolution*, Leslie Sponsel argues animism is the oldest religion in the world. Many indigenous belief systems are rooted in the ritual of place and recognizing spirits in natural surroundings.<sup>83</sup> In *Spiritual Ecology: Cry of the Earth*, different authors contribute their definitions to the growing field. Native American activist and scholar Winona LaDuke emphasizes the relationship of the web of life as what is spiritual in ecology.<sup>84</sup> Chief Oren Lyons sees the spiritual emerge in the “powerful cycles of regeneration” in the world around him; he writes that to interrupt this cycle is to take huge risks.<sup>85</sup> Other writers come from Buddhist, Hindu, Indigenous, and Christian traditions. What these authors are beckoning readers to see in these belief systems is a calling to move from individualism to interrelationship. They want humans to come to terms with seeing the sacred in all life.<sup>86</sup> This core message of spiritual ecology is helpful as interrelationship needs to be focused on more and more. However, an extremely broad umbrella definition for spiritual ecology is unhelpful here where I am trying to

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<sup>83</sup> Leslie Sponsel, *Spiritual Ecology: A Quiet Revolution* (Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger, 2012), 10-11.

<sup>84</sup> Winona LaDuke, “In the Time of the Sacred Places,” in *Spiritual Ecology: Cry of the Earth*, ed. Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee (Point Reyes, CA: Golden Sufi Center, 2013), 85.

<sup>85</sup> Chief Oren Lyons, “Listening to Natural Law” in *Spiritual Ecology*, 9.

<sup>86</sup> Vaughan-Lee, “Introduction,” in *Spiritual Ecology*, iv.

redefine and further reclaim Christian angles on ecology and agriculture.

In discussing the Christian authors of spiritual ecology, similar themes are championed. Thomas Berry reminds us of the wonder and awe inspired by sunrises and stars. Richard Rohr argues that because God declares creation as good and sees it as part of the body of God, we need to care for the earth. He uses Thomas Aquinas to build his case declaring the diversity of the world represents God more than any single entity, and we should respect creation because of that reality. St. Francis is brought up often as the saint who appreciated nature and incorporated it into his faith seamlessly. However, the effects of dualism run deep even with these arguments. The soul and body continue to be separated in church teachings, and because of that many Christian church members remain ignorant of and/or inactive in the call to defend the earth despite more Christian leaders recognizing ecological devastation and faith cannot be separated.<sup>87</sup> Perhaps one reason for inaction is many of these calls for and recognitions of ecological justice too often end up being in word only. With the Christian church population in North America declining, it is important to spur on the conversation of climate change, pollution, and degradation as a faith issue to invigorate more than just faith leaders to become involved.

It is here that I do not want to exclude other religions because I think they are wrong, but rather because of the unique qualities Christianity can bring to light in the spiritual ecology conversation where agriculture and relationship to food are concerned. Aspects such as Incarnation and Eucharist are unique to Christianity as previously discussed and will continue to be unpacked. Panentheism also continues to be utilized in this discussion as Christianity differentiates itself from animism in that a flower is not a spirit unto itself, but it is a part of the

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<sup>87</sup> Groups who have statements and some action on climate change include the World Council of Churches, Blessed Tomorrow, Creation Justice Ministries, Young Evangelicals for Climate Change, and various church denominations statements.

body of God. The purposeful manner of biological processes point to a divine character as Philip Clayton describes.<sup>88</sup> Clayton explains that while God is infinite and infinite expands beyond the finite, God also relies on the interactions within this finite world because our experiences are wrapped up in the nature of God's actual experience.<sup>89</sup> As Clayton states elsewhere, "What is infinite must include the finite, otherwise the infinite will be limited by that which lies outside it and hence no longer infinite."<sup>90</sup> Therefore, recognizing non-human entities in their intrinsic, inherent, and instrumental values is vital to the conversation in this dissertation as *how we live* in relationship matters in both finite and infinite ways. The Christian church and its leaders must move beyond statements to actions and stronger relationships which the farmers in this study do well. But before we examine their work and lives, it is important to examine other works in matters of spiritual formation, food, and relationship.

### **The Present Part II: Merging Food, Faith, and Spiritual Formation**

Building a theological case for a panentheistic view is more easily practiced than argued. Many authors have risen to the challenge of trying to articulate what this life practice looks like though. The works I review here include books from Douglas Christie, Sarah McFarland Taylor, Norman Wirzba, and Fred Bahnson namely because they are dedicated to a certain kind of spiritual formation and relationship with the earth. They each set out on their own journeys of understanding. Taylor dedicates years to working with Catholic nuns who are committed to

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<sup>88</sup> Philip Clayton, *Adventures in the Spirit: God, World, Divine Action* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2008), 107-108.

<sup>89</sup> Philip Clayton, "Panentheism in Metaphysical and Scientific Perspective," in *In Whom We Live and Move and Have Our Being: Panentheistic Reflections on God's Presence in a Scientific World*, ed. Philip Clayton and Arthur Peacock (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 2004), 83.

<sup>90</sup> Clayton, *Adventures*, 119-120.

environmental justice – even to the point of identifying as Green Sisters. Wirzba wants to better define a Trinitarian view of eating and communion with “God the Gardener.”<sup>91</sup> This idea of the garden is taken a step further by Bahnson who actually runs a garden as part of his faith convictions and visits different faith and farming communities around North America. Finally, Christie’s work defines a new lens of contemplative ecology. He probably would not identify as agrarian or agricultural, but his understanding of spirituality and the contemplative life helps shape a framework of place vital to this discussion.

By examining these newer voices in the food and faith conversation, the dialogue which started with the likes of Berry, Leopold, and Jackson continues in creative ways. Namely here is where I begin to demonstrate what a spiritual lens, practice, and framework intertwined with agriculture can look like. In this way, I am beginning to shape an agricultural spirituality. This agricultural spirituality involves five elements and practices from these writers 1. A rooted sense of place; 2. Embodied use of senses especially where eating is concerned; 3. Relational awareness involving contemplative seeing and justice; 4. Reengaging work; and 5. Cycles of life and death. These are aspects I will build on in my own model of agricultural spirituality in the chapters to come.

### A Rooted Sense of Place

One cannot escape a rich sense of place in these authors’ lives. Christie describes the feeling he gets when he gathers at a rally to save a forest. The music of the drums there in rhythm with the swaying trees invokes this passage: “There is only this pulse, this rhythm, this forest, and all of us, dancing and moving together...There is only this wordless celebration of

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<sup>91</sup> Norman Wirzba, *Food and Faith: A Theology of Eating* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), xiii.

community, solidarity, ecstatic wonder. It feels sufficient in that moment to let the pulse of this wild place carry us, console us, renew us.”<sup>92</sup> This wordlessness carries into the other authors’ experiences as well. Bahnson rejects transcendent notions of spirituality instead desiring a “rooted spirituality.”<sup>93</sup> He wants to meet Jesus in the dirt, understanding his body needs to be connected to the earth to truly experience God. This is also true of the Green Sisters. Their vows are dedicated to serving God, but this is understood through Taylor’s research as reinhabiting. What this rehabiting lifestyle means is dedicating oneself through ritual and practice to a place. God is moving and working in the earth; therefore, they give their lives in obedience to such things as living simply, listening to the needs of the earth, and fighting injustice when it comes to exploitation of resources. Wirzba also reminds readers of the importance of understanding “culture” originally meant to be connected to a piece of land. Disconnection from land and place through commuting and automation is to dislocate ourselves from the moral and spiritual moorings of our lives. To lose a sense of the processes of life in a place is tragic as this is a loss of history, relationship, and identity.<sup>94</sup>

### Embodied Use of Senses

Wirzba recognizes, not only are we born into a place, but a place enters into us through our senses as well. His book is about eating, so this is understandable. He writes, “Eating is the daily confirmation that we need others and are vulnerable to them.”<sup>95</sup> But to understand those

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<sup>92</sup> Douglas E. Christie, *The Blue Sapphire of the Mind: Notes for a Contemplative Ecology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 2.

<sup>93</sup> Fred Bahnson, *Soil and Sacrament: A Spiritual Memoir of Food and Faith* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2013), 17.

<sup>94</sup> Wirzba, *Food*, 37, 40.

<sup>95</sup> Wirzba, *Food*, 77.



relationships, one must be tuned in to what eating entails. For Wirzba, this means being involved as much as possible in food production and preparation: “To know food with depth we need to know what is there, how it came to be there, what it is for, and why it matters that we have it in particular sorts of ways.”<sup>96</sup> This is vital because he is reclaiming eating as a “sacramental rather than a sacrilegious act.”<sup>97</sup> The Green Sisters understand this sacrament. As Taylor describes it: “eating is an act in which earth, water, and sun become human flesh and are transformed.”<sup>98</sup> Their cooking classes and food practices invoke a slow and contemplative appreciation of their senses. One sister describes the experience as just that: an experience that is wordless and meditative.

### Relational Awareness

The meditation does not end at eating. By engaging and embodying place and our senses, an awareness is developed about the world and the injustice in it. Christie addresses matters of injustice that arise when one attends to place. When the personal, political, economic, and historical intersect, feelings emerge that need to move into action. It is easy to become paralyzed by fear and anxiety, but the writers in these books do not stop with feelings. By further understanding Word and World as inseparable, Christie asks readers to learn to listen: “What might it mean to listen with such care and attention that the life and spirit of the world became audible, perhaps even intelligible? What would it mean to respond to this ‘word’ so fully and deeply?”<sup>99</sup> The response for Bahnson and Taylor includes bold examples such as farmers in

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<sup>96</sup> Wirzba, *Food*, 4.

<sup>97</sup> Wirzba, *Food*, 4.

<sup>98</sup> Sarah McFarland Taylor, *Green Sisters: A Spiritual Ecology* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 173-174.

<sup>99</sup> Christie, *Blue Sapphire*, 183.

Chiapas burning their coffee crop while reading the prophet Isaiah to protest unjust global markets<sup>100</sup> and nuns going to jail for social justice actions of protesting military dictators and hiding refugees.<sup>101</sup> These actions speak to a global awareness and understanding of the ramifications of humans who have lived too long off of exploitation and abuse (both of other humans and non-human entities). These illustrations show people cannot help but act when they understand the web of relationships around them. Contemplation leads to connection and when we are connected to others, we must act for the sake of their dignity.

### Reengaging Work

Dignity reclaimed, though, does not *just* mean working for others and on behalf of injustice. The largest practice in this dissertation as well as in these books is working with the earth in agriculture and gardening. The Benedictine Rule of life is brought up by Bahnson, Christie, and Taylor. It demonstrates life should not only be dedicated to scripture reading, spiritual services, and prayer, but to labor too. Unceasing prayer can be done in labor and in any vocation; all work is spiritual work.

The aspect of work in regards to eating in these sources is unique. Specifically, the work of agriculture and eating takes on a spiritually formative lens. As Taylor describes it, “working with the land can be, among many other things, devotion, worship, contemplation, prayer, sacred service, and mystical experience.”<sup>102</sup> Furthering this idea, the sisters describe their work in the soil as connected to their souls and as sacred work. Miriam MacGillis, founder of Genesis Farm is quoted, “We need to see farmers as entering the sanctuary of the soil and engaging the

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<sup>100</sup> Bahnson, *Soil*, 69.

<sup>101</sup> Taylor, *Green Sisters*, 59-60.

<sup>102</sup> Taylor, *Green Sisters*, 183.

mysterious forces of creation in order to bless and nourish the inner and outer life of the community they serve.”<sup>103</sup> In essence, this is about farmers realizing they are prophets and priests in their vocations. But it is not just the farmers who need to connect with the soil. Bahnson speaks with a monk who calls out seminaries as being places only stimulating minds while neglecting work with hands.<sup>104</sup> The spirit and mind of work need to be connected to the work of our hands. Otherwise we risk the disconnection and dislocation of place, meaning, and truth mentioned earlier. With work threatening to become more automated and technology rampant, there has never been a more urgent time to encourage a living-to-work mentality. But there also is a caveat to this conversation of the people who must work to live. Laborers, field workers, and slaughter house line employees, to name a few, do not have the privilege of not engaging work with their hands. The monotony can bring disconnect too, as can the daily beating down of manual labor. There is not room here to bring this conversation fully into the light except encouragement that engaging one’s senses, awareness, and matters of justice changes reality too.

### Cycles of Life and Death

Once one taps into the experiences of place and engaging their senses, a new awareness comes into focus. It is in this contemplative state where work is not just about toil, but connection to something deeper. One does not reach euphoria when this embodied awareness around the earth and work roots; rather, they find they must come to grips with dying and suffering. This last point is one of the strongest in these works and bridges to the earlier ideas about Eucharist and cyclical patterns of seeing the Incarnation around us. From death comes life. Those in the farming industry, laborers and animals alike, know this. The farmers in my research

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<sup>103</sup> Taylor, *Green Sisters*, 186.

<sup>104</sup> Bahnson, *Soil*, 35, 114.

know this. For those on the outside of the food conversation, working towards this awareness means opening one's self up to the suffering and vulnerability of this broken system. As Christie questions, so do I, "Why open oneself so fully to affliction?"<sup>105</sup> Why not remain in ignorance? Or worse, fall into depression, fatalism, and defeat? Christie elaborates, "Rooted in acceptance...such contemplative practice becomes a means of standing in and reckoning with the full extent of the embodied suffering visited upon us and the world. Because these things exist. Because acknowledging their existence and opening oneself to them is already a significant and courageous gesture of solidarity."<sup>106</sup> This stance and positioning invokes conversations of privilege. The privilege to bow out of the sacrifice required to eat is just that – privilege. Wirzba calls closing off one's self, the bowing out of the system, sin: "The sin talked about here is not any one particular act but a disposition and an entire way of being, a way of living that is not attuned to life with and for others but a life of self-enclosure and self-magnification."<sup>107</sup> It is a way of life that rejects relationship and dependence on God and the world.

When this suffering is realized either in lived experience or by tuning in to what is happening in the agricultural systems of our world, one must come face to face with death. The farmers in this study are no different. They realize to eat means to kill. In this realization, these authors grapple with death too. Wirzba sees death as a gift – an individual offering itself to further life in new ways. Life must be given away to fully experience it. If we fear death, he says, we become incapable of the ability to truly love.<sup>108</sup> As an example of this mentality, Bahnson

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<sup>105</sup> Christie, *Blue Sapphire*, 287.

<sup>106</sup> Christie, *Blue Sapphire*, 287.

<sup>107</sup> Wirzba, *Food*, 114.

<sup>108</sup> Wirzba, *Food*, 112-113.

tracks the history of WWII and the Great Depression. In times of dire need, there was a recognition of helping neighbor especially in the history of one farm he visits. This is echoed in the history of women on farms in chapter three. But with prosperity and capitalism, the farm Bahnson speaks of died off because of neglect of relationships. When this farm is resurrected, Bahnson learns two valuable lessons: Feed my sheep is a real and literal call from Jesus and “In farming, and in life, pay attention to relationships. Stay close to the edges, for that’s where you’ll find the greatest energy.”<sup>109</sup> It is at this edge that one might say Eucharist lives... and dies. Bahnson sees this Incarnational Eucharist being reborn every day in the world around him and in growing food. He can be a co-creator with God.<sup>110</sup> This co-creation does not elevate man, but rather, breaks down barriers. “[W]hen strangers grow and share food together, the Other ceases to be so threatening,” Bahnson writes.<sup>111</sup> Death no longer reigns, but gives way to Eucharistic remembrance and life in resurrection. As Wirzba states, “self-offering leads to true life,” as was modeled in Jesus’ Eucharistic sacrifice and resurrection.<sup>112</sup> What was modeled was not an escape of biological death, but death as self-offering in order to realize life more abundant. A life lived in ignorance, privilege, and isolation is not the healthy community Jesus wanted for his followers.

We now remember this offering in food, labor, and relationship. One might call this ordinary, but the Green Sisters see the ordinary as blessed sacraments. They understand Eucharist in eating by seeing the death and resurrection in each meal and modeled in nature.

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<sup>109</sup> Bahnson, *Soil*, 119.

<sup>110</sup> Bahnson, *Soil*, 75.

<sup>111</sup> Bahnson, *Soil*, 194.

<sup>112</sup> Wirzba, *Food*, 124.

They champion permaculture which is a form of planting that replicates a forest. In this type of model, plants are left alone to grow – and die – as they would in a forest without humans around. Humans glean food just as animals do, but the ecosystem goes on in the mysterious unfolding of creation. Everything is connected. It is not about one entity in permaculture, but fertile relationships. These relationships depend on some living and some dying – on plants and biological matter breaking down, some being eaten, and others growing new fruit. It is a pattern of sorts, Taylor explains, requiring patience and new lenses to see. Most of all, this spirituality requires experience of place, relationship, and attention to God. It entails walking the land, embodying place and practice, being aware of who is present and who is not, and calling out injustice. That is what a life lived in death and resurrection calls out in us – to be aware, to act, and to live a life worthy of self-offering: the self-offering of Christ and seeking to be self-offerers as well.

This type of contemplation and spirituality requires work, work and labor many already do and are exploited for. The four authors ending the conversation here are not and have not been exploited nor have their bodies been used to produce food and products for the masses. That is true of the practical theologians and perhaps even the historical scholars in this chapter too. While all of these perspectives are vital to understanding spirituality, an ecofeminist lens is needed in this conversation. Ecofeminist activists and scholars have seen these intersections for decades, centuries really, as abuse of women, the marginalized, and the earth have been connected since the dawn of time. The foundations in this chapter of transformation, spirituality, and resurrection among others are vital, but the conversation and action must be added to, which is the invitation of the next chapter and the chapters that follow. For what is at stake is to miss vital stories of those working daily for the sake of life and death. Stories of relationship, place,

and God, which are the pillars of agricultural spirituality this dissertation will build on to understand the embodying work of the Spirit in the webs around us.

## Chapter 2

### Addressing Injustice: Ecofeminism as Partnering Framework

To understand agricultural spirituality in a holistic way, one must consider the voices and bodies present in the conversation, but also the ones missing. In chapter one, the areas of practical theology, spirituality, and spiritual formation and farming are examined. The scholars in chapter one consider important resources, but none of them writing on faith and food (except for Sarah McFarland Taylor), consider the field of ecofeminism as a partner in this conversation. Ecofeminism is still a newer field having been established by French feminist Francoise d'Eaubonne in the seventies.<sup>113</sup> She calls women to an ecological revolution due to both women and the environment being the most exploited aspects of dominant patriarchal cultural decisions. This lens is invaluable in a dialogue mostly shaped by Western, academic men. That is not to say their work is not important, but once again, this dissertation's intention is to bring more perspectives to the table. Therefore, this chapter presents the major tenets from a literature review in the field of ecofeminism. I will then compare the tenets of ecofeminism to cases for biocentrism as a way forward in agricultural ethics, which is often given as a solution moving forward. However, after a critique of biocentrism, I will argue Carolyn Merchant's partnership ethics coupled with an ecofeminist framework is the strongest case for addressing injustice in the area of food, agriculture, and spirituality.

Many academics, activists, and artists have answered d'Eaubonne's call, challenging patriarchal and androcentric structures around the world. People such as Greta Gaard, Karen

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<sup>113</sup> As Heather Eaton explains, "The term 'ecofeminism' was coined by French feminist Francoise d'Eaubonne in *Le Feminisme ou la Mort* (1974) when she called upon women to lead an ecological revolution to save the planet." Heather Eaton, *Introducing Ecofeminist Theologies* (London: T & T Clark International, 2005), 3.



Warren, Val Plumwood, Marti Kheel, Ivone Gebara, Carol J. Adams, Vandava Shiva, Gabriele Dietrich, Lori Gruen, Heather Eaton, and Rosemary Radford Ruether shape the dialogue around ecological concerns and feminism. They inquire where we have been in matters of justice with hopes that new visions (and voices) may emerge towards a more inclusive future. It must be noted that by and large, the conversation is shaped by Western academic voices. With that in mind, my intention is to also focus on the works of Ivone Gebara and Gabriele Dietrich to bring a more global perspective to the conversation of ecofeminism as well.

An exploration of ecofeminism is necessary here as ecofeminism is a lens and methodology of recognizing and working alongside the “others,” our kin, who have been shut out of the conversation. Ecofeminists recognize life and scholarship is not about theory or history in and of themselves, but moving to action. Ecofeminism needs to be considered as a process more than a theory. Warren advocates for engaging in a continual conversation and process where nothing is fixed and rules are not ascribed – to do so would be to operate in a rights-based mentality, which ecofeminism seeks to avoid.<sup>114</sup> It is a field merging analysis and practice for the sake of living differently. Goals, in and of themselves, are not the ultimate aim as ecofeminism does not seek something measureable. Scholars understand the cycle of life and death will continue, building on a lens of resurrection. So instead, their passion is to work towards a world free of domination. Even if someone does not ascribe to being an ecofeminist, ecofeminism as framework to live holistically with awareness of our neighbors at all times is an important construct to the work presented in the subsequent chapters. A biocentric view aims towards this

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<sup>114</sup> Karen J. Warren, *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What it is and Why it Matters* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing, 2000), 143.

as well, but I argue here ecofeminism is a stronger framework to deal with injustice and help marginalized voices because it is more relationally based.

### **Tenets of Ecofeminism**

The five major tenets from the main body of ecofeminist literature present a process for dealing with domination and exploitation. They are: Unearthing Dualistic Tendencies, Establishing Interrelationships, Valuing Experience and Context, Embracing Spirituality and a Moral Lens, and Utilizing and Growing Compassion. It is vital to explore these components to understand where the field of ecofeminism is at and where it is going. The need to deconstruct patriarchal power structures and ideals of domination are at the forefront of the conversation. Dismantling dualisms are a large part of this, but it is vital to see the other components as they point to a reconstructive path in ecofeminism. In this way, ecofeminism can emerge as a new way of being in world where spirituality, relationship, place, and compassion are welcomed. These tenets then take root in an active partnership ethic to make collaborative change.

#### **Unearthing Dualistic Tendencies**

Scholars in this field examine dualistic tendencies as a marker of justifying power dynamics. As Plumwood explains, “A dualism is more than a relation of dichotomy, difference, or non-identity, and more than a simple hierarchical relationship. In Dualistic culture, the values and the areas of life associated with the dualised other are systematically and pervasively constructed and depicted as inferior.”<sup>115</sup> In other words, the internalization of the dualisms, which often goes unspoken, is what ecofeminists seek to expose, critique, and deconstruct. The history traced by ecofeminists begins with Plato’s hierarchal ontology where one can see dualisms forming in order to control and master “the other.” Labeling matter as a “passive receptacle”

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<sup>115</sup> Val Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (London: Routledge, 1993), 47.

leads to further ideas of what had importance.<sup>116</sup> After Plato, Hellenistic notions of the body and spirit in harmony give way even more as Aristotle's ideas came into focus. His view of gender is that, as Ruether explains, "Women are defined as secondary and auxiliary beings or as biologically and morally 'defective males.'"<sup>117</sup> Consequently, the female in Greek and Old Testament thought becomes the harbinger of evil in the forms of Eve and Pandora. The need to subdue and control women and nature follow these beliefs because of their particular need for redemption. The world can no longer be something God created as good because woman and animal introduced evil.

This history is part of the conversation, but it is also important to explain the characteristics of the dualisms and how they led to dominant and controlling systems. Articulating the characteristics is especially valuable where religion is concerned because Christianity follows suit embracing apocalyptic thinking and dualism. As Ruether describes, "Cosmic alienation and spiritual dualism" of this nature end up on a spectrum never to be value-free but either sacred/sacramental or demonic.<sup>118</sup> Therefore, even more attention should be given to duality in the religious sphere because dualisms have been and are used not only for societal oppression, but religious abuse as well.

Plumwood's five characterizations of dualisms are championed by many ecofeminists. They include: Backgrounding, Radical exclusion, Incorporation, Objectification, and Homogenization. *Backgrounding*, or denial, is the idea that the master does not exist without the slave, but the master denies the necessity of the relationship for him to have power. The one in

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<sup>116</sup> Plumwood, *Feminism*, 192.

<sup>117</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether, *New Woman, New Earth: Sexist Ideologies and Human Liberation* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), 15.

<sup>118</sup> Ruether, *New Woman*, 190.

power – the master – views “the other” as inessential and never considers perspectives outside of himself due to the dualism of master/slave. What follows is the other being lower and being treated as such leads to *radical exclusion*. Justifications exist in the language of assumed born traits of people groups, polarization, denial of things in common, and erecting barriers.

Considered sacred is what isolates and protects the privileged group. Where gender is concerned, having things in common between different genders is discouraged because it would upset the dualism power balance. The master overemphasizes the differences in order to maintain separation.<sup>119</sup> The result is the master then being in charge of definitions and overseeing how *incorporation* in society happens. For example, *woman* is defined by and for man, not the other way around for herself; an indigenous person is “uncivil” because of how the powerful have defined behavior. One must assimilate to “reflect the master’s desires, needs and lacks.”<sup>120</sup>

Therefore, *objectification* occurs as the lowers (or downs) are perceived as instruments for the master’s end. A good wife, or a good colonized person, is seen as performing for the needs of the person in power. Finally, *homogenization* keeps the power system in place because then the lowers know what they need to conform to in order to be considered normative. Diversity is not valued. In this way, “homogenization supports both instrumentalism, incorporation and radical exclusion. It produces binarism, a division of the world into two orders,”<sup>121</sup> the master and the others.

This summary of the characteristics of dualisms demonstrates how history has been manipulated for the power of a few. Ecofeminists are right to point out how these dualisms have

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<sup>119</sup> Plumwood, *Feminism*, 48-49.

<sup>120</sup> Plumwood, *Feminism*, 52.

<sup>121</sup> Plumwood, *Feminism*, 54.

shaped social consciousness (and unconsciousness) in order to find another way forward.

Plumwood advocates for rewriting the master identity narrative. She wants to recognize and make room for the voices long denied. The foundation of her remapping is the flourishing of all others, “which can acknowledge kinship but also feast on the other’s resistance and grow strong on their difference.”<sup>122</sup>

Other calls follow to acknowledge the dualisms and desiring to move beyond them. Stephanie Lahar wants more emphasis placed on seeing each individual as an asset, whether human or nonhuman, in order to build commonality. She writes, “The purpose of working out an integrated philosophy of humanity and nature is not only to challenge dualisms to reflect more clearly our lived experience in theory but also to describe relations among women, men, society, and nonhuman nature in a way that is conducive to a high quality of life and antithetical to oppression and exploitation.”<sup>123</sup> Therefore, instead of valuing the dualistic system of domination, the focus becomes the relationship between all parties. Moving forward from dualism, then, gives voice to more cultures than just Western lenses, which primarily shape globalization. Even though some critics notice the tendency to discuss dualisms as only shaped by Western philosophy and religion, because so much of the world is built on these binaries, they still need to be called out.

### Establishing Interrelationships

Being reflexive about the dualisms shaping our lives can help us to examine how relationships form us. Birkeland is one of the voices championing respectful interrelationship based on biocentricity and intrinsic value instead of hierarchy. The reason this has not happened

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<sup>122</sup> Plumwood, *Feminism*, 195-196.

<sup>123</sup> Stephanie Lahar, “Ecofeminist Theory and Grassroots Politics,” *Hypatia* 6, no. 1 (Spring 1991): 38, accessed July 5, 2015. JSTOR.

yet, according to her, is that liberalist strategy is still relying on the paradigm of treating the self as individual outside of context.<sup>124</sup> Life does not happen in a vacuum, and when we look at numbers and statistics, we need to realize there are stories behind them with layers and details. This builds on Lahar's idea of seeing the individual in relationship from the previous section. If the self is put on a pedestal outside of community, this risks a self/object divide, where some people get to be selves and others become objects on display for pleasure. If we think about the connections between animals and women put on display for others in ads, shows, magazines, and books, we can see how intersubjectivity is not a priority.<sup>125</sup>

Another reason the framework of interrelationships is not embraced yet is also the narrative of competition revolving around evolution. Donna Haraway's work highlights this as she shows how the intersections of gender, race, and science revolve around an explanation of evolutionary aggression.<sup>126</sup> Because the focus of evolution revolves around competition, the actual cooperative way an ecosystem works is overshadowed. By defining personal competition as "natural," working cooperatively with others in relationship suffers in the Western context. The world, for most, is organized androcentrically, meaning freedom and opportunity are not equally distributed for men and women.<sup>127</sup> This could stem from the false idea that

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<sup>124</sup> Janis Birkeland, "Ecofeminism: Linking Theory and Practice" in *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals Nature*, ed. Greta Gaard (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 43.

<sup>125</sup> Carol J. Adams and Lori Gruen, "Groundwork" in *Ecofeminism: Feminist Intersections with Other Animals and the Earth*, ed. Carol J. Adams and Lori Gruen (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 26-27.

<sup>126</sup> Eaton, *Introducing*, 19.

<sup>127</sup> Eaton, *Introducing*, 43-44.

evolutionarily, women are not “built” for the public world. However, it is a matter of what is given value in our society.

When it comes to familial and societal relationships, economic and monetary value is championed instead of recognizing the strengths of persons and communities. For example, men’s work is measured by income in farming communities, but women’s agricultural work goes unaccounted for due to not always being income-based. This paradigm exists, despite women doing the majority of the labor, because they do not have land rights or access to ownership in large-scale farming. Women in the domain of caretaking children are never valued monetarily nor has maternity leave been considered as a serious policy priority or economically valuable in the US. Development projects for women and others in majority-world nations place people in a consumption relationship with the world instead of working towards community and self-reliance. These people must produce products for trade or purchase in order to find value.<sup>128</sup> Furthermore, in terms of what is valued, when tragedy and violence strike, the dead are counted, but “the destruction of the environment, the death of animals, the poisoning of natural springs, and the destruction of the present and future means of survival of those who have not died,” the biotic community relationships, as well as the emotional toll for survivors, are not measured.<sup>129</sup>

The conversation of what is valued needs to consider relationships on a larger level. If relationships and equality are more evenly distributed, not based on monetary value, but on principle, patriarchy can be transformed into a new relationship of mutuality, as Ruether argues. Her point is that in a globalized world, “promoting women’s equality is not a matter of separating women from men or children... Rather its purpose is to convert the relation of women

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<sup>128</sup> Birkeland, “Ecofeminism,” 33.

<sup>129</sup> Ivone Gebara, *Longing for Running Water: Ecofeminism and Liberation* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1999), 451-452, Kindle.

and men to a greater partnership and sharing of the care of households and children, tasks which presently fall disproportionately on the shoulders of women... Not only is this not anti-family, but in fact families and particularly children are the first beneficiaries of such restoration of men to caring relations with women and children.”<sup>130</sup> Building from a place of recognizing mutually beneficial relationships within family and society units can then help men recover their lost soul and women recover their rational, autonomous self.<sup>131</sup> In this way, the control paradigm can shift by no longer promoting objectification, sexism, racism, classism, naturism, or domination in any form—beginning at home. By placing relationships-in-context as the foundation of relationships instead of individual rights, values begin to be constructed differently.<sup>132</sup>

The interrelationship idea is not just about humans though. If the focus is more on cooperation than competition, nature begins to undergo a paradigm shift as well from the human point of view. Defining nature can be complicated; it can mean both “human nature” and nature in terms of biological and geographical systems. In this case, I believe it can mean both. If human nature shifts from an underpinning of socially constructed aggression (i.e. “survival of the fittest”), then the domination of nature/environment is no longer a priority. The human is *a part of* nature, not above it – in relationships *with* instead of *power over*. One can investigate their surroundings with a different lens than Western culture prescribes. Gebara explains when we begin to understand our surroundings by becoming acquainted with them, we will see local vegetation (or lack thereof), the quality of air and water, and how resources are used in reimagined ways. The hope is that when this education occurs, the matters of environment will

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<sup>130</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Integrating Ecofeminism, Globalization, and World Religions* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishing, 2005), 13.

<sup>131</sup> Ruether, *New Woman*, 29.

<sup>132</sup> Warren, *Ecofeminist*, 98-101.



matter to the neighborhood. And when she speaks of neighborhood, she also means, “not only the geographical space in which a large group of houses are built, but also the persons who live in them: their difficulties, their means of subsistence, their hopes and their dreams.”<sup>133</sup> However, as Linda Vance demonstrates, the stories of place and environment are often about drama, not the relationships Gebara is advocating. Drought, floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, and blizzards, occupy the story of place rather than the spirit of place. Ecological history ends up being about how it has affected humans instead of the history of the land as told through the native people, plants, and flowers.<sup>134</sup> Shifting to see nature around us as a web of life where reciprocity is valued over resources means kinship with our ecosystems becomes of the utmost importance.<sup>135</sup> In this way, by valuing our kin, human and nonhuman alike, we dismantle the hierarchies around us that tell us to take control and exercise power. This is the profound lesson of ecological interrelationship.<sup>136</sup>

### Valuing Experience and Context

As we pay attention then to the relationships around us in this web – families, communities, and ecosystems -- or how these relationships lack in systems of power and justice, we can begin to see how experience and context are integral themes in ecofeminism. The experience of transformation is what is desired by ecofeminists.<sup>137</sup> Scholars and activists in this

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<sup>133</sup> Gebara, *Longing*, Kindle Locations 398-401.

<sup>134</sup> Linda Vance, “Ecofeminism and the Politics of Reality” in *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals Nature*, ed. Greta Gaard (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993) 127,129.

<sup>135</sup> Birkeland, “Ecofeminism,” 19.

<sup>136</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Gaia & God: An Ecofeminist Theology of Earth Healing* (San Francisco: Harper, 1992), 47-48.

<sup>137</sup> Lahar, “Ecofeminist,” 30.

field want to challenge and rebuild social and political agendas and actions in the world. But they do this by beginning right where they are as well as seeking out stories of those who are not always included. In order to value experience, we must look at whose experiences are and have been valued. Vance makes the strong observation of men's stories being the ones counted in history while the majority of the time women's accounts can only be found in letters and diaries. For example, we can easily find accounts of wilderness explorations and hunting by men, but she says she "can do no more than speculate on what his wife, at home, used to catch her menstrual flow."<sup>138</sup> In other words, women's stories are harder to find and still need to be sought out. She is not alone in her call as Ruether and Plumwood call for more women's experiences to be included as well.

Including women's stories does not mean essentializing or standardizing women's roles or certain environmental practices. "Far from being reductionistic or simplistic, ecofeminism is a textured field of theoretical and experiential insights, encompassing different forms of knowledge, and embodied in the particular," Eaton explains.<sup>139</sup> One of the voices speaking to the particular is Gebara. She embraces her environment as her kin, as well as her teacher, facing life in a poor neighborhood in San Paulo, Brazil. In her own words, she describes how her ecofeminist lens has taken shape:

I sense that ecofeminism is born of daily life, of day-to-day sharing among people, of enduring together garbage in the streets, bad smells, the absence of sewers and safe drinking water, poor nutrition, and inadequate health care. The ecofeminist issue is born of the lack of municipal garbage collection, of the multiplication of rats, cockroaches, and mosquitoes, and of the sores on children's skin. This is true because it is usually women who have to deal with daily survival issues: keeping the house clean and feeding and washing children.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Vance, "Ecofeminism," 122.

<sup>139</sup> Eaton, *Introducing*, 30.

<sup>140</sup> Gebara, *Longing*, Kindle Locations 111-114.

She writes elsewhere that because living in poverty means every day is a struggle to survive, there is not a lot of room left to work for change.<sup>141</sup> This is her context – her experience – and it gives her a platform for change unlike any other ecofeminist because she is linked to the “world of the poor, of the hungry, and of the illiterate; of those who have no land on which to live and those who live on lands tainted by toxic wastes and nuclear radiation. I am talking about the growing mass of the excluded, those who are struggling for survival and dignity.”<sup>142</sup> Her experience has forced her to see how her body connects with other bodies in place. Experience can no longer be about disconnection even though a technological world would prefer homogenization – not acknowledging “place” more and more as we disappear into our screens. If not technology, then land deals and degradation force women into the margins even more because those are the places they can work, and then cannot due to being forced out.<sup>143</sup>

Being *in place* and recognizing experience forces us to wrestle with the untold stories of oppression as well as the realities of life and death. From environmental racism in the United States to the stories Gabriele Dietrich writes on the women of Tamil Nadu and Kerala, India, experiences must be valued as starting places to change. Chaone Mallory’s case study at a local food co-op in Philadelphia also demonstrates how stories can challenge social norms to change. She argues that we must ground ourselves in place embracing and embodying the culture and ecology around us to define our ethics. Otherwise, the local food scene risks becoming a beacon

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<sup>141</sup> Ivone Gebara, "A Feminist Theology of Liberation: A Latin Perspective with a View Toward the Future," in *Hope Abundant: Third World and Indigenous Women's Theology*, ed. Kwok Pui-lan (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2010), 54.

<sup>142</sup> Gebara, *Longing*, Kindle Locations 321-326.

<sup>143</sup> Gabriele Dietrich, "People's Movements, the Strength of Wisdom, and the Twisted Path of Civilization" in *Toward a New Heaven and a New Earth*, ed. Fernando F. Segovia (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2003), 414.

of white, liberal privilege.<sup>144</sup> Ecofeminism is central to this challenge because it confronts oppression head-on, inviting us to consider, not just humans, but the web of life in a place. Mallory writes, “It is typical in all social movements for social change to initially want to address issues separately, but ecofeminism allows us to think the social and the ecological together, and to understand that they must be addressed together to be addressed at all.”<sup>145</sup> This starts on the ground, in place, where we face the circle of life and death by becoming aware of the experiences around us both of humans and nonhumans. Farmers understand the webs of relationship, and by focusing on the narratives of the farmers and the places they live and work in chapters six through nine, this dissertation presents strong case studies of how these tenets of ecofeminism can work together.

#### Embracing Spirituality and a Moral Lens

When one is listening to the stories of kinship around her and building relationships focused on transformation, she is called out of numbness and into a moral and spiritual way of being in the world. No longer held by boundaries of segregation, one can welcome diversity and a sense of Spirit, which is a theme in much of the ecofeminist writings. Even if the literature is not religious, the ethics surrounding ecofeminism illustrate and challenge an embracing of intrinsic value in everything.<sup>146</sup> In order to move forward, some deny the church and religion in all forms, but others seek a redefining and reordering of relationships in faith communities and in their ethical view of the world. This redefining begins with a panentheistic view of the Divine’s work in the world much like is discussed in chapter one in Clayton’s work. No longer is “God”

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<sup>144</sup> Chaone Mallory, “Locating Ecofeminism in Encounters with Food and Place,” *Journal of Agricultural Environmental Ethics* 26 (2013): 174.

<sup>145</sup> Mallory, “Locating,” 187.

<sup>146</sup> Birkeland, “Ecofeminism,” 19.

above the earth in a heavenly realm separated from what is happening. Instead, Ruether invokes the language of “transcendent immanence.” She explains, “[Panentheism/transcendent immanence] both sustains the constant renewal of the natural cycles of life and also empowers us to struggle against the hierarchies of dominance and to create renewed relations of mutual affirmation.”<sup>147</sup> The process of life, death, and resurrection, again, demonstrate a way forward which does not revolve around competition and dualisms, but rooted in something deeper: a sense of the Spirit moving in mutual affirmation and compassion.

Another way of explaining this is to see the Spirit embodied in matter, meaning both human and nonhuman entities.<sup>148</sup> Gebara articulates how this lens changes our behavior when she writes, “the ecofeminist perspective opens us to see the sacred dimension of our Cosmic Body and prompts us to assume a humility that dismisses all our totalitarian pretensions. It opens us to an attitude that seeks community and solidarity among all beings.”<sup>149</sup> To use Hildegard von Bingen’s life as an example again, she understands this kind of humility. Often sick, Hildegard is forced to lie down frequently and sees her life horizontally while in confession with her nose pressed to the ground. Choosing humility instead of humiliation, Hildegard recognizes this act as connected to humus. Sharon Betcher explores these connections of Hildegard to the humus around her and found that these acts lead Hildegard to believe in the locally grounded work of the Spirit, beginning with a connection to the ground. Betcher explains, “But to be sure, humility, let us admit, is a very vulnerable power, a fragile proposition on the part of Divine Spirit, trusting

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<sup>147</sup> Ruether, *Integrating*, 125.

<sup>148</sup> Gabriele Dietrich, “The World as the Body of God: Feminist Perspectives on Ecology and Social Justice” in *Women Healing Earth: Third World Women on Ecology, Feminism, and Religion*, ed. Rosemary Radford Ruether (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1996), 97.

<sup>149</sup> Gebara, *Longing*, Kindle Locations 1664-1665.

that we should be able to learn to lean into each other in mutuality and respectful interdependence, trusting that we should be able to break the habits of mastery and control and domination, that we might love and not loathe ground and gravity.”<sup>150</sup> The humility lived out here is not one of subordination though. Rather, this form of spirituality means we are not bound to the past. Instead, we are called fully into the present in the form of mutual and equitable relationships. In this way, we do not forsake the past, but are able to call out the injustice caused by a dominating lens of anthropocentrism and androcentrism as shaped by our connection to the Spirit in and around us.<sup>151</sup>

As we are challenged to move forward with a new lens on the Spirit, it is important to ask how this is lived out. That question is at the heart of the research presented later, but Gebara also applies this framework and praxis. She does not focus on dramatic headlines of the day, but in the gratitude and humility found in the possibilities of every moment. Sacredness and salvation to her are found in friendships, in music, in a glass of water, and realizing resurrection is a process not a theory.<sup>152</sup> Building on this idea then, resurrection is something that happens again and again if we are attune to it. The experience of bodies can be appreciated. Further, we are able to realize not every *body* is valued. As we reunite bodies and souls, spirit and earth, we need to reclaim the soil around us as a sacred act. Being thankful in getting dirty is something the church has often rejected. This can be seen in the metaphors I hear so often of washing our sins white as snow or Jesus cleansing me. The cleansing represents a move to a separated life. However,

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<sup>150</sup> Sharon Betcher, “Grounding the Spirit: An Ecofeminist Pneumatology” in *Ecospirit: Religion, Philosophy, and the Earth*, ed. Laurel Kearns and Catherine Keller (Bronx, NY: Fordham University Press, 2007), 332.

<sup>151</sup> Eaton, *Introducing*, 78.

<sup>152</sup> Ivone Gebara, *Out of the Depths: Women's Experience of Evil and Salvation* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 122,124.

ecofeminists are calling for a pneumatology that grounds us on earth. “If God’s passion is for mortal, corporeal, material, and sentient life, then Spirit isn’t so much interested in extricating souls from the world milieu as in rooting life in the material world,” Betcher explains.<sup>153</sup> Our freedom, then, is bound to those around us in our webs, not in another world.

However, realizing our rootedness and freedom in the Spirit in this world calls for recognizing our mortality.<sup>154</sup> This is not easy to do in a Western culture that glorifies immortality and not being sick. An ecofeminist pneumatology acknowledges vulnerability and pain that come with death without connecting it to a separate realm or making it a punishment for something evil.<sup>155</sup> If we consider the common Christian phrase “in the world, but not of it,” perhaps an ecofeminist reading of this passage could add to the panentheistic dialogue. If the Spirit is in the world, instead of being “set apart,” (as some traditional commentaries make a case for), we can see Jesus is inviting us actually *into* the world. To not be “of” the world, is to not be part of the systems of oppression that are not inherent to the world. If the Spirit guides us in this world, then, the Spirit rejoices with those who rejoice and weeps with those who weep.

Because to be a member in the world among so many other members means acknowledging that some members have to die for others to live. Farmers understand this reality more so than the general public. As Gruen explains, just because one chooses to be vegan does not mean they are not involved in killing.<sup>156</sup> Less killing, possibly, but agricultural practices in

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<sup>153</sup> Betcher, “Grounding,” 329.

<sup>154</sup> Ruether, *New Woman*, 211.

<sup>155</sup> Betcher, “Grounding,” 334.

<sup>156</sup> Lori Gruen, “Facing Death and Practicing Grief” in *Ecofeminism: Feminist Intersections with Other Animals and the Earth*, ed. Carol J. Adams and Lori Gruen (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 135.

the U.S. demonstrate organisms in the soil, animals, and birds are all affected by the spraying of pesticides and the lack of biodiversity. Eating is not a value-neutral act. Therefore, again, the role of grief and mourning also highlights ritual as important especially where food is concerned.

Gruen writes on ritual, encouraging a different lens on metabolizing: “In the case of animals who suffer and die in factory farms and laboratories, as well as those who are dying as ice caps melt and habitats are destroyed, we need to metabolize communally... to share in our grief, to memorialize and mourn those who have died. Collectively grieving provides a way to honor the precariousness and fragility of our entangled lives.”<sup>157</sup> Consequently, the act of grounding ourselves where we are includes embracing the freedom to create new liturgies and rituals where our spiritualities are concerned. It is also helpful to rediscover and redefine older liturgies, rituals, and texts, too, with the hope they can be reclaimed in a more holistic light.

Part of this work, then, as we root ourselves in this world, is examining how ecofeminists address the role of bible. Even if one is not a Christian, since the Western world has been shaped in part by Christian-thought, this is a vital investigation. The bible was written in an androcentric world with cultures where women were considered property to be given and taken away. Furthermore, the bible is used today predominately as a narrative of redemption instead of an account of the goodness of creation.<sup>158</sup> But many voices are challenging this lens. By inquiring about interpretation and why the religious texts are used as they are, ecofeminists have made questioning norms the standard and, where the bible is concerned, this is no different. Eaton points out the bible has been used to justify oppression, violence, and death, but the ideas of covenant, jubilee, and connecting with liberation theology can help redefine damning acts and

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<sup>157</sup> Gruen, “Facing Death,” 139.

<sup>158</sup> Eaton, *Introducing*, 78.



mindsets.<sup>159</sup> Although, Gebara is not as excited about liberation theology anymore as she says the actions have not caught up to the words. But, she is still challenged by the greatest commandment which includes loving neighbor and takes this mandate to the extreme.<sup>160</sup>

More insights on ecofeminists' reexamination of scripture come from Ruether's analysis of the prophets. She illustrates in Joel, Isaiah, and Amos that social and natural hostilities go together: "In the biblical view, the raping of nature and the exploitation of people in society are profoundly understood as part of one reality, creating disaster in both."<sup>161</sup> But the restoration is linked, too, through righteousness in repairing the nature/social world link. The way out of exploitation is finding the interconnections of the Spirit around us. This Spirit is often referred to and personified as Sophia, a female figure representing the Wisdom of God. So, whether it is reconnecting to relationships around us through the dirt or through the Spirit named Sophia, ecofeminists are challenging us to embrace a spirituality and/or ethics that move us to act for the sake of our neighbors around us – human and nonhuman alike.

#### Utilizing and Growing Compassion

One last theme helps to bridge this idea of how we should act in the Spirit. Compassion is not a new idea, but is emerging more in ecofeminist writing. It should be noted the point of bringing compassion into this conversation is not to connect women to compassion, thereby making an essentialist argument. As mentioned earlier, the focus on competition instead of

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<sup>159</sup> Eaton, *Introducing*, 81-82.

<sup>160</sup> Ivone Gebara, "Cosmic Theology: Ecofeminism and Pantheism," in *Readings in Ecology and Feminist Theology*, ed. Mary Heather MacKinnon and Moni McIntyre (Kansas City, MO: Sheed & Ward, 1995), 209.

<sup>161</sup> Rosemary Radford Ruether, "The Biblical Vision of the Ecological Crisis," in *Readings in Ecology and Feminist Theology*, ed. Mary Heather MacKinnon and Moni McIntyre (Kansas City, MO: Sheed & Ward, 1995), 81.

cooperation valued in all kinds of relationships has shaped our social constructs immensely despite the reality of ecosystems working in cooperative ways every day. Kheel elaborates, “what needs to be explained is not how and why people should be compelled to behave in moral ways, but how and why compassion and moral behavior fail to be sustained.”<sup>162</sup>

The focus on ethics has not aided in the dialogue either. At its core, ethics seeks to find the right way to operate in the world. This lens still revolves around a mechanized view relying much too heavily on reason.<sup>163</sup> To give feelings and emotions credence remains a marginalized view. Reductionist science and philosophy weed out emotions as credible, a result of being stuck in a dualistic mindset. Deane Curtin gives compassion its due in the latest ecofeminist anthology, though, drawing out ideas worthy of attention. In order to really understand compassion, it is a practice to grow, not a trait, he explains. Empathy is viewed as a starting place, but compassion requires a “deep, ongoing pattern of engagement.”<sup>164</sup> The way it is practiced according to Curtin is to find the roots of suffering in ourselves and others. An applicable metaphor is as follows: compassion allows for surgery where an empathetic Band-Aid has been placed. The result is movement and action towards health in the best way possible. Curtin’s focus on the three poisons in Buddhism is helpful which are identifying greed, anger, and ignorance. The attempt in the last two chapters of this dissertation is to demonstrate what a compassionate ecofeminist practice looks like. Is it only making changes to eating habits? Or participating in helping our neighbors? If compassion truly is embodying reflection and action, what would this posture look like in the

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<sup>162</sup> Marti Kheel, “From Heroic to Holistic Ethics: The Ecofeminist Challenge” in *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals Nature*, ed. Greta Gaard (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), 255.

<sup>163</sup> Kheel, “From Heroic,” 249.

<sup>164</sup> Deane Curtin, “Compassion and Being Human” in *Ecofeminism: Feminist Intersections with Other Animals and the Earth*, ed. Carol J. Adams and Lori Gruen (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014), 46.

world where civility seems to go by the wayside constantly and segregation of humans, humans from animals, and plants from other plants and animals still reigns? As Ruether writes, “Compassion for all living things fills our spirits, breaking down the illusion of otherness.”<sup>165</sup> We just need more examples of what this looks like. The hope moving forward is that these farmers’ stories illustrated in chapters six through nine will round out this conversation. Their narratives are provided for the purpose of inspiring others to live differently and more connected to the world around them. These women do not necessarily ascribe to theories, but to work – the work of life and death, the work of the seasons and land, the work of partnership with creation. As these tenets of ecofeminism are embraced, partnership in compassion becomes a way to move forward. Some would see this represented in a biocentric framework or ethic rather than ecofeminism, but with the critique of biocentrism that follows, a stronger case will be made for an ecofeminist practice rooted in partnership ethics.

### **Biocentric Critique**

Many scholars and activists working with the environment see biocentrism (ecocentrism or earth-centeredness) as an answer to the issues of domination and exploitation. Biocentrism represents a reaction against a way of being in the world that is anthropocentric, dualistic, and domineering – much of what ecofeminists stand against. An earth-centered perspective may be presented as an anecdote moving forward, but in the end, it breaks down. Many philosophers, eco-conscious activists, and even ecofeminists, as discussed previously, cite Descartes’ division of the mind and matter as the beginning of man locating himself above nature. The idea that man<sup>166</sup> can manipulate nature becomes more common than ever before in

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<sup>165</sup> Ruether, *Gaia*, 252.

<sup>166</sup> The use of the word “man” is intentional as woman are seen as an object and subservient to men in history. In some cases this is still reality.

history when dualism is embraced. The world champions this idea more and more in the beginning of the industrial era in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries when machine is valued over nature. Industrialization peaks in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> centuries with Malthusian ideas of resource limitations and population growth. New ideas are needed as pollution, smog, and waste resulted from materialistic tendencies of humankind.

A reactive response to the human-centered, master-relationship prior to ecofeminism is a biocentric ethic by philosophers seeking to change our interactions with nature. Rasa Hage and Alona Rauckiene' explain, "Dualism (human/animal, mind/body, masculine/feminine, reason/emotion, spirit/matter) and inspired hegemonic thinking are replaced in the ecological philosophy by a worldview that perceives reality not as a collection of discrete and isolated entities but as a dynamic relational web [of] unbroken 'wholeness.'"<sup>167</sup> This web is described in two main arguments of biocentrism from Paul Taylor and Aldo Leopold. One cannot read about an earth ethic and miss their work. Firstly, Leopold's essay from 1949 in *Sand County Almanac* is considered one of the most important documents of environmental philosophy and conservation. He describes his desire to see land-use ethics move from being solely about economics and instead preserve the beauty of biotic communities. The soil must be seen as, not just land to use, but a conduit of energy for the sun and plants which needs to be regarded as something of value not to be exploited. Individuality has shifted the human community away from co-operation to embracing the violence of extraction and economically driven models of using nature. A land ethic seeks to imbue ecological consciousness into individuals, extending

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<sup>167</sup> Rasa Hage and Alona Rauckiene', "Ecocentric Worldview Paradigm: The Reconstruction of Consciousness," *Journal of Baltic Science Education* 2, no. 6 (2004): 64, accessed August 7, 2015. <http://web.b.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail/detail?vid=2&sid=e9825cf2-8a30-4e56-94ec-e707969ffc88@sessionmgr112&hid=102&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ==#db=aph&AN=15174831>.

awareness and value beyond humans to soil, animals, plants, and water. Leopold summarizes his ethic as changing “the role of Homo sapiens from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies respect for his fellow-members, and also respect for the community as such.”<sup>168</sup> He does not come out against management, agriculture, or solely championing conservation, but instead, he wants to bring ethics back into the fields.

Also seeking to find respect for nature, Taylor introduces another framework of biocentrism. His four main components consist of: 1) Humans as equal members with nonhumans of the Earth’s community. 2) Earth’s ecosystems are interconnected webs of life where interdependence with one another’s biology is essential. 3) Each individual organism is a “teleological center of life, pursuing its own good in its own way.” 4) Humans are not superior to other species, as evidenced in the first three points, and as such, the claim of superiority must be rejected.<sup>169</sup> Ideally, this all sounds wonderful. Being conscious of the environment and seeking equality with all living creators instead of exploiting them is a strong foundation for sustainability activism. However, as one keeps investigating the practicality of such an ethic, it begins to break down. By placing humans on an equal level with other beings, the result actually ends with taking humans out of nature<sup>170</sup> rather than recognizing equitable relationships. What I mean by this is if humans were to engage in an ecosystem by placing themselves in equal

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<sup>168</sup> Aldo Leopold, “The Land Ethic,” in *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*, ed. Michael Zimmerman et al., 4th ed. (Upper Saddle River: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2005), 104.

<sup>169</sup> Paul W. Taylor, “The Ethics of Respect for Nature,” in *Environmental Philosophy*, 70.

<sup>170</sup> The term nature can be problematic and needs to put in context. As highlighted earlier as well, it can mean the character of something, an inherent direction of the world, humans, or both, or the material world itself, which may or may not include humans. Depending on the field (history, science, religion), nature can have different histories; it can be changing or not. Sometimes some people are thought of as being closer to nature or more in touch with their own nature. The term, in short, can be problematic. As discussed here, it will refer to the ecosystem patterns of the biomes where all life has a role to play.

relationships with nature, living standards would drastically change. Humans would need to expose themselves to much more than they are now. Take for instance insect spray for a beehive in a playground which cannot be removed safely. What is equal partnership here? The kids leaving the playground? Not to dwell too long on fictitious examples, but it is important to see how the argument quickly becomes about wilderness and taking humans out of the picture to restore habitat and ecosystems, as will be discussed further shortly.

In terms of living things having a role to play, this is where the biocentric conversation needs clarification. What is that role? Is the role purely to be a resource or consumer as is presented in ecology? What does this mean when value, morals, and worth are factored into the conversation? The basis for many, if not all, biocentric frameworks revolve around species equality and intrinsic value. The critiques level these ideas. Carolyn Merchant challenges biocentrism on multiple levels beginning with the idea if it comes to killing or using the last of a species, the ethic may result in using homocentric justifications in the end which points to really seeing humans at the center, not biocentrism after all. Her second challenge is giving value to an objective ecological system. Can we infer richness and goodness, essentially values, to rocks, animals, and plants? Finally, the biocentric dialogues are mostly, if not all, shaped by white men and largely, over the course of the history of this field, they do not deal with gender, racial, and species difference adequately.<sup>171</sup> In the view of the marginalized, there is a subordination to the whole no matter who you are – mosquito, dog, or person – based on who shapes the idea of what is equitable and whole.

Once humans are placed in a way that is equal with other species, the challenge then, as J.

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<sup>171</sup> Carolyn Merchant, *Radical Ecology: The Search for a Livable World*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (New York: Routledge, 2005), 79-81.

Claude Evans argues, is to not reduce living things to abstractions. If we are to consider the value of something important, then we must consider both the inherent and instrumental value because living things are bound to the energy and nutrition of the ecosystems in which they are a member.<sup>172</sup> If biocentric frameworks are to take interdependence seriously, then they must realize humans are a part of nature. Instead, traditional biocentric frameworks of deep ecologists, like George Sessions, champion preserving wilderness for the sake of the earth. His desire is for a more boundaried world where wilderness is untouched by humans.<sup>173</sup> This wilderness idea presents the new version of dualism biocentrists seek where humans should remove themselves from nature – again separation reigns. If we convert areas into wilderness, then we are not recognizing the history of human partnership with the landscape existing long before European Americans arrived. First Nation peoples were the first to utilize agricultural methods and killing animals in hunts as part of their way of living in the wilderness.

Further, the arguments and energy dedicated to this conversation pay more attention to where humans do not live instead of dealing with the environments we inhabit now. When such a heavy focus is placed on conservation and wilderness preservation in these conversations, it “serves to disguise and minimize the range of important natures all around us, in cities, vacant lots, and old farm fields. An environmental movement aimed only at preserving wilderness, therefore, will largely ignore places we live, work and play;”<sup>174</sup> not to mention not recognize how

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<sup>172</sup> J. Claude Evans, *With Respect for Nature Living as Part of the Natural World* (New York: State University of New York Press, 2005), xiii.

<sup>173</sup> George Sessions, "Ecocentrism, Wilderness, and Global Ecosystem Protection," in *Deep Ecology for the 21st Century: Readings on the Philosophy and Practice of the New Environmentalism*, ed. George Sessions (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1995), 360.

<sup>174</sup> Paul Robbins et al., *Environment and Society: A Critical Introduction* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 28.

human impact has desecrated some wilderness areas and needs human intervention for repair.

Furthermore, many who desire a biocentric world realize their principles are not achievable. Taylor, Leopold, Sessions, Bill Devall, and Albert Schweitzer all concede that some form of disruption, use, alteration, and/or management must occur for humans to live.<sup>175</sup> Constraint is then encouraged, but what this could look like is left up to the reader. The choice biocentrists present, then, is dichotomous resulting in choosing either dominating anthropocentrism or biocentric egalitarianism.<sup>176</sup> Ironically, both choices lead to a human superiority complex of who is doing “it” right, therefore, not escaping hierarchy either.<sup>177</sup> As humans are placed in the ecosystems alongside other forms of life, how then, do we move forward? The answer for me lies in a reciprocal, partnership ethic embracing the reconstructive tenets of ecofeminism mentioned earlier.

### **Partnership Ethic Rooted in Ecological Reciprocity and Action**

Firstly, it must be mentioned that partnership ethics take the principles of ecology seriously, address sentience, and understand the cycles of life and death in order to develop community-based, relationship-focused practices based on partnership, reciprocity and action. Ecology looks at what and how things are used in regards to regeneration, environmental problems, and changes as they play out in certain biomes. The food chains, spatial and temporal scales, as well as understanding the role each part plays defines ecology.

With the central role of activism, ecology is one of the foremost voices of not using up resources in destructive manners. Ecologists want to preserve and conserve our world. This does

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<sup>175</sup> Evans, *With Respect*, xii. He presents a strong, detailed summary of each author’s concession,

<sup>176</sup> Evans, *With Respect*, xiv.

<sup>177</sup> Evans, *With Respect*, 106.



not always mean protecting it either as it is proven to be healthy to let natural predators roam and landscapes evolve sometimes with the help of humans and other times not. Illustrations of this partnership include wildfires and human-made fires as part of the care of Yosemite National Park. When fires are put out constantly, authorities notice it actually harms the ecosystem. Instead, now, with controlled fires and allowing wildfires to take their course, an element of control is released and what is best for all parties emerges. Reintroducing wolves into Yellowstone National Park has also been an amazing partnership between humans, animals, and ecosystems returning to balance. When elk have no predators, the plants are decimated. Now with the wolf population reemerging, the elk and plants are operating in a more holistic system. The role of ecologists in this system recognize life and death as part of the cycle where every entity has a role to play, partnered with each other.

However, one's preservation will always be at the cost of another entity. The arguments around biocentrism and other ethical frameworks, such as ecofeminism, often discuss sentience as a manner of how we conduct ourselves with other creatures in regards to life and death. If an animal can suffer, then should we take part in that suffering? This connotation of sentience as avoiding pain if possible is to ignore being alive. As Baird Callicott points out, he may have to take his dog to a veterinarian and cause it pain to get well. I have had to hold down my children while they received stitches or had a bone set. Therefore, he points to Kenneth Goodpastor's argument that sentience is not solid ground for moral considerability. Instead, we should consider Joel Feinberg's idea of interests: "the right thing to do for a being that has interests is to at least respect if not actively foster those interests and the wrong thing to do is to abrogate those

interests – whether in the process the beneficiary experience pleasure or pain does not matter.”<sup>178</sup>

Is the ultimate interest thriving life for all then? Should an animal not be killed for meat or a tree not cut down? Again, we see why Goodpastor adds his name to the list of biocentric philosophers who recognize killing and experimentation for the sake of knowledge and sustenance must still occur.<sup>179</sup>

To take ecology into account again can help as the role of death is not seen as a loss, but actually an act of reciprocity needed to continue life – an act of resurrection. This does not justify the taking of lives unnecessarily. We can see how a slippery slope could result from this argument. Barry Lopez unpacks this reality:

No culture has yet solved the dilemma each has faced with the growth of a conscious mind: how to live a moral and compassionate existence when one is fully aware the blood, the horror inherent in all life, when one finds darkness not only in one’s own culture but within oneself. If there is a stage at which an individual life becomes truly adult, it must be when one grasps the irony in its unfolding and accepts responsibility for a life lived in the midst of such paradox. One must live in the middle of contradiction because if all contradiction were eliminated at once life would collapse.<sup>180</sup>

Evans quotes Lopez to ground his own argument of advocating for hunting as a way to embrace reciprocity with a certain kind of biocentric anthropocentrism. He presents his case in that we cannot take ourselves out of the system and actually do greater harm by actively not participating or ignoring what is happening in our ecosystems. Positioning himself in seeking ways to live, he writes, “we may claim to take the intrinsic value of nonhuman nature seriously, but reality

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<sup>178</sup> J. Baird Callicott, *Thinking like a Planet: The Land Ethic and the Earth Ethic* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 220.

<sup>179</sup> K. E. Goodpastor, “One Being Morally Considerable,” *Journal of Philosophy* 75 (1978), 324, quoted in Callicott, *Thinking*, 232.

<sup>180</sup> Barry Lopez, *Arctic Dreams* (New York: Bantam Books: 1987), 413 quoted in Evans, *With Respect*, 11-12.

teaches us that this is strictly window dressing with no practical value in the long run.”<sup>181</sup>

Practically, what does this look like then? How do we rectify death as a means of survival and not exploitation? When it comes to hunting one’s own food, Evans looks to ecofeminist Plumwood for his answer of how this is reciprocal: “The answer is that it has already received it in life itself, existence as part of the cycle of embodiment. The idea of the food chain as a cycle of sharing and exchange of life in which all ultimately participate as food for other is what we should understand by reciprocity here.”<sup>182</sup> This is not far off from indigenous views on hunting either. Navajo and Sioux hunting traditions invoke blessings and rites in which they seek to hunt in an honorable way. They honor the deer with a prayer of gratitude and promise the deer that it will feed them, the land and flowers, as will the person hunting be returned to the earth in the end.<sup>183</sup> The mindfulness and awareness of this approach cannot be underestimated as it takes into account the death we will all face at some point, not seeking to avoid it or walk into it blindly, but that reciprocity is part of every entity. Summarizing Evans on his pastime, then, he writes, when we only focus on the project of a hunt, we miss the purpose – which is not just killing – that makes the animal a trophy or object. But when we see the animal as the world, as part of a process of life and death, we are part of a deeper process.<sup>184</sup> The farming narratives presented in later chapters also embrace this deeper process. The farmers dedicate their vocation to working within the processes of life and death.

The result of this conversation, then, leads us not to a biocentric or anthropocentric ethic,

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<sup>181</sup> Evans, *With Respect*, 135.

<sup>182</sup> Val Plumwood, “Integrating Ethical Frameworks for Animals, Humans and Nature: A Critical Feminist Eco-Socialist Analysis,” *Ethics and the Environment* 5, no.2, 319 n.21, quoted in Evans, 144.

<sup>183</sup> Evans, *With Respect*, 73, 147.

<sup>184</sup> Evans, *With Respect*, 168.

but a partnership ethic rooted in the ecological principles. Merchant explains, “A partnership ethic is grounded in the concept of relation rather than in the ego, society, or the cosmos.”<sup>185</sup> This means that, “A partnership ethic holds that the greatest good for the human and nonhuman communities is in their mutual living interdependence.”<sup>186</sup> The five precepts of the partnership ethic, as outlined by Merchant, consist of “1) Equity between the human and nonhuman communities. 2) Moral consideration for both humans and other species. 3) Respect for both cultural diversity and biodiversity. 4) Inclusion of women, minorities, and nonhuman nature in the code of ethical accountability. 5) An ecologically sound management that is consistent with the continued health of both the human and nonhuman communities.”<sup>187</sup> There are elements in these points of humans not being center of the universe, which is what biocentrism reacts to in anthropocentrism. But also, this is different from a stewardship or responsibility ethic as well. In the end, to be “responsible” for something is still to exercise some control as well as guiding from an epistemic place which says someone – a human – knows better and can lead the way. Ultimately, the knowledge in a partnership ethic is different as it roots in relationship, not control, and only from inside the relationships can forward movement occur.

Practically, this framework takes hold very concretely in human and nonhuman contexts. It often exercises itself in what I would call community-based or hyperlocal ways, meaning if one pays attention to their literal backyard and to the nonhuman (as well as the human) environment around them, to be “in relationship” in this way begins to shift how one participates in that context. Merchant gives examples of a neighborhood in Minnesota having issues with

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<sup>185</sup> Merchant, *Radical Ecology*, 85.

<sup>186</sup> Merchant, *Radical Ecology*, 83.

<sup>187</sup> Merchant, *Radical Ecology*, 84.

stormwater runoff. The citizens saw an opportunity to work with many different human and nonhuman needs in mind. By reconsidering and redesigning yards, vacant lots, and curbside strips with native plants, they were able to partner in beneficial ways with all parties so the stormwater could be utilized and not wasted. Other examples include Oakland residents restoring biodiversity to the city's oak groves, and Mississippi recreating the original floodplain on which the city was built with the convention center overlooking this restored area. Her point is that, "People and nature thrive together in a partnership in which both are actors in producing the result."<sup>188</sup> The farm stories presented later echo this idea where ecosystems are honored as part of the give and take of partnership with the land and creatures within it.

If we only look at and champion mechanics in planning neighborhoods, agriculture ventures, buildings, and cities, they can falter due to the unpredictable ways of weather and geological events. By incorporating more of an example of the flow of energy from ecology, the result is ceasing to control nature, and, rather, work with it. Catastrophic events are probably still on the rise in our world, but instead of building for the sake to build, it is worth asking how should we best build in an area (or is it wise to) if this area floods, experiences earthquakes, etc.? Instead of moving forward for the sake of humans, it is in the interest of every living thing to consider the flow of nature in time and space as well. The practice of partnership ethics is not to bow out and boundary the environment, nor is it to use up and exploit people and resources. Instead the tenets of partnership invite reciprocal relationships through practical education, awareness, resources, and restoration.

When it comes to issues of eating, the partnership ethic can be seen again in Evans' work. He presents hunting and fishing as a partnership response as it is not as harmful as factory

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<sup>188</sup> Carolyn Merchant, "Partnership with Nature," *Landscape Journal* 17, no. 2 (1998), 70.

farming, and it puts us back in relationship with our environment because it is “honest.” What this means is that he is honoring the cycle and process of life and death within his ecosystem. No matter if one is vegetarian, vegan, or not, animals die so we can eat. Fields are cleared for vegetables or pastures, taking away wild habitats. Fossil fuels are required to ship most food thousands of miles to arrive on our plates. This notion of whose life is worth more is exemplified strongly in Evan’s story of Ted Kerasote’s experience of turning away from vegetarianism when he takes up local hunting again. He bears the life and pain of an elk he killed as he wanders out of the forest with the animal around his shoulders. He reflects on this one life that will feed him for a year and considers his old life of eating rice and beans. Often his vegetarian diet was at the expense of using oil to ship his food from all over the world and in that, the taking of lives such as otters and seals in that process.<sup>189</sup> Evans follows Kerasote’s example with this summary, “The point is that there is no human life that can be lived without the responsibility for the burden it imposes on the lives of the animals around us, and that respectful hunting is one way of living with and living up to this responsibility, of giving it an affirmative meaning in the practices that constitute our lives.”<sup>190</sup> Respectful and reciprocal appropriation and partnership is the way forward, then, because there is really no way to live without appropriation of some kind. The farmers I met understand this idea well. Whether it be squishing cucumber beetles, using a sling shot on birds, or having to kill a cow, their actions are about partnership in their settings. It does not always sound honoring, but as their stories are explored further, the core of their actions and the responsibility they feel for these ecosystems points to the deeper responsibility of living in

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<sup>189</sup> Ted Kerasote, *Bloodties: Nature, Culture, and the Hunt* (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1994), 185 in Evans, *With Respect*, 149.

<sup>190</sup> Evans, *With Respect*, 149.

partnership. Exploitation and profit are not the goals.

Partnership is diverse, frustrating, creative, inspiring, and hard. This is what happens when one gains an awareness of the life and death around them. Life cannot always be formulaic, rote, categorized, orderly, or romanticized. It is not supposed to be. Consequently, neither can death. By honoring the equity of all life, being morally considerate, respecting diversity and biodiversity, including the marginalized voices and needs, as well as honoring the health of human and nonhuman communities, a more holistic and realistic foundation for sustainability can and does emerge. Furthermore, as we seek to take root, we must consider the soil as well as the humans, plants, and animals in an ecosystem. Soil is the building block of life. It contains innumerable organisms and life forms. It breaks down death and resurrects life. It makes room for seeds, soaks up water, and provides a place for our feet to land. It truly is the womb of the earth. This does not mean women are more connected to the earth, but because of the history of abuse and violence, women are socially constructed to be closer to the earth, which has been demonstrated in the previous discussion of ecofeminism. We need to learn about the soil where we are. As we learn about our soil, in turn, we learn what grows and what eats what. For the biotic system is not a peaceful one, but it tries to find harmony in its own process. Learning about the ground will focus and connect us to a world beyond ourselves, but connect us in place. Place is something farmers in this study understand and connect to deeply.

Before examining place in chapter three, it is important to reflect on how ecofeminism and a rooted partnership ethic call people out of numbness and ignorance. These frameworks challenge the systems of power and “master” narratives by asking and reflecting on why the church, government, agriculture, school, and family units operate the way they do? As people question dualisms, problematize romanticized solutions, and learn to understand their neighbors

better, new paradigms are emerging and can emerge as personal hierarchies are dismantled. In doing so, we realize the structure (and game) behind systems of power – systems that still seeks order in patriarchal hierarchy and neat dualisms rather than challenging the normative culture. Fortunately (and unfortunately), over the ages women have always reckoned with these systems. Whatever crises arose, be it wars, depressions, or recessions, women came together in entrepreneurial and creative ways to survive and thrive. Continuing to highlight women's stories and others' voices who are not present in the historical accounts is imperative. Chapter three dives into this history in more detail as the context and past is important to discuss before the present and future.



### Chapter 3

#### Midwives of Resilience: US Women Farmers, Past and Present

Chapter two discussed the literature in ecofeminism and critiqued biocentrism in order to uncover a partnership framework to assist in grounding an agricultural spirituality. By embracing intersubjectivity and experience in a partnership ethic, the story of a place both historically and presently is vital to an examination of this kind. My intention is to focus on the “place” of the US by examining four different farms in four different states. Interestingly, a focus on US women is absent from the ecofeminism literature as more attention is given to women working in agriculture in majority-world countries. But the study of women farmers in the US is an active scholarly conversation in the field of history and in other academic journals and news reports.

Ecofeminists challenge us to be aware of how women and other marginalized groups want to retain their dignity while working for liberation, but also consider, as Dietrich points out, how can we do this without breaking up local communities and traditions? She poignantly explains, “It is a question of how roots and wings relate to each other.”<sup>191</sup> The historical, sociological, and governmental accounts of women on US farms over the span of the last 100 years dive into this conversation, but without an examination of ecofeminist or spiritual motivations. Therefore, chapter three explores the historical and present-day literature of women farmers in the US before presenting my research methodology and narratives in subsequent chapters. The scholars here examine hyper-local environments while engaging in a community dialogue on a larger scale. While the authors do not claim to represent ecofeminism, the female farmers discussed in their work are situated in strong positions in their local contexts to speak

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<sup>191</sup> Dietrich, “People’s Movements,” 414.

and act in matters needing advocacy and attention in their day. These examples make for exemplary case studies of the partnership ethic and even showcase connections to agricultural spiritual formation in the way they advocate for their communities and live their lives. This advocacy work then results in a midwifery action plan for local contexts by viewing the accounts here through Gloria L. Schaab's Midwifery Model. By embracing the role of the midwife, we can see how one can champion an ecosystem and the relationships in it while maintaining awareness and mutuality.

### **History of Women Farmers in the US**

The history of women who farm in the United States is as diverse as the United States itself. Each region has its own context, people groups, and histories. While my intention is not to illuminate the entire history of farming in the U.S., it is important to identify some important characteristics of *place* and *relationship* in the world of agriculture in North America in the last century. The researchers represented here study certain areas of time and locations. For instance, Jenny Barker Devine focuses on the family farm in Iowa and how women's activism shaped rural communities and the feminist conversation in their areas. Rose Hayden-Smith explores the period of World War I and various gardening programs for women in that era. Lu Ann Jones writes about women farming in the South in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and Grey Osterud discusses the farming communities of upstate New York in same timeframe. While each author and context has certain individual traits, women faced similar issues on farms in the early- and mid-1900s. The first World War, the Great Depression, and changes in industrialism, household management, and government policy all presented challenges to women in agriculture. The challenges women confronted and continue to deal with shape women's roles in agriculture today.

Each author presents women rising to the challenges of their day. No one was unaffected by war and depression. Most people were pulled into work of some sort and the poor - black and white - were relegated to working in the fields during these hard times. This is not to say black and white people faced the same racial tensions or issues. When it comes to the history of black (and brown) bodies being used and bought to make a profit off of the land and their work, there are stark differences in the contexts of these stories. My point is to highlight the work of women during the last 100 years and their resilience and partnership mentality no matter the circumstance or their ethnicity. Women were integral and essential when there were not enough hired hands, and women regularly did the hardest jobs often with hand tools.<sup>192</sup> Women's work is not given enough credit in historical circles. It is often discussed as filling in for the men in areas of labor and manufacturing during times of war, and then returning to domesticity after the men returned from war. There are more to these stories though.

Women rose to the agricultural and economic demands during times of war and depression. As Hayden-Smith illustrates, Women's Land Armies were created in WWI along with other women's organizations to garden and grow food in their communities. The US government needed women to be spearheading issues related to food and consumption. The articles and magazines of this era pressed women to produce and cook their own food. Hayden-Smith elaborates, "There was tremendous pressure on American women to produce food in home gardens, not only as an expression of patriotism and as their concrete contribution to helping America win the war, but as an expression of their role as women."<sup>193</sup> Women were able to

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<sup>192</sup> Lu Ann Jones, *Mama Learned Us to Work: Farm Women in the New South* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 7.

<sup>193</sup> Rose Hayden-Smith, *Sowing the Seeds of Victory: American Gardening Programs of World War I* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2014), 68.

transcend their traditional roles in wartimes, but this also meant they were championing the home front with their home gardens. They saw their land, even if it was a backyard, as a means to partnership in many ways: with their soil, homes, communities, and country.

Leadership opportunities came in various forms, not only in the home, but in the surrounding communities as well. The work of gardening and cooking in these harsh seasons reduced expenses and selling homemade goods brought income as well. An example of ingenuity and survival was women bartering, for instance: eggs for groceries. The poultry network these women created laid the foundation for larger poultry businesses after WW2.<sup>194</sup>

On a larger scale, women were inspired to become writers and activists, wanting to influence at a larger level, but always for the sake of their local communities and families. There were classes offered with programs like the Women's Land Army and the national home training programs. Thousands of women were trained on home management, poultry keeping, and sewing among other things. Women became experts in different areas and in their communities. Sisterhoods formed. The training schools, home agent programs, and extension services resulted in advocating for their communities in areas of health, prenatal care, education, and agriculture. The more ownership one had, the more leadership they had. The program did not extend to African American women for almost a decade. However, even as time marched on and the depression and wars came to a close, Jones argues, women continued to champion home gardens and feeding their families from their efforts despite racial inequity. Her interviewees - black and white - remember being poor in hard times, but they never missed a meal and this was always credited to the women of the community.<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>194</sup> Jones, *Mama*, 23.

<sup>195</sup> Jones, *Mama*, 5.

After WWII, the mechanization of the farm and home life, along with the emergence of feminist dialogue, led to new discussions in the matters of urban and rural divides. Jobs were replaced by machines, and land to cultivate dwindled. Family members left the farm for opportunities in the city. The myth that continues today is that mechanization led to an urban/rural divide. Devine argues the urban/rural binary as a false distinction though because farms have always been connected to cities. Farms were too small to divide. Larger mills and manufacturers left smaller operators struggling. This left no other option for some family members than to depart. Even Teddy Roosevelt saw the rural decline and sought remedies, but the remedy was to make farming more profitable. The missing element and key was that no one was looking to save *the communal way of life*. The US government made a shift from cooperatives and barter economies to a commodity market. Individual farmers were now to be focused on competition.<sup>196</sup>

Again, women began to reimagine space and formed new communities where their voices were valued. Clubs and auxiliaries started where “[s]ocial feminisms allowed women to create safe, separate spaces where they could engage in activism on specific issues, such as public health, maternal and infant care, education, or industrial safety, without challenging male-dominated political systems.”<sup>197</sup> In the era of Betty Friedan’s unnamed problem, what farm women were lamenting was not a need for their work to be realized or named because work was always a part of their lives. Most in the farm community were not blaming urban flight or mechanization, but an oppressive political system. The focus for both rural women and men

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<sup>196</sup> Jenny Barker Devine, *On Behalf of the Family Farm: Iowa Farm Women’s Activism Since 1945* (Iowa City, IA: University of Iowa Press, 2013), 8-12.

<sup>197</sup> Devine, *On Behalf*, 3.

became on system of oppression on the rural life by government and rules made by men far away.

Women did not challenge gender norms and power structures at home because everyone around them was oppressed by this system. It is important to understand the difference between Friedan's ideas and that of agrarian feminism in that the "former focused on individual rights, while the latter emphasized community."<sup>198</sup> The rural ideals and the romanticism of Jefferson's agrarian culture were desired in that there was a collective appreciation of everyone's role on the farm. Instead of suppression of roles, there was an appreciation of "mutuality." In other words, "community" defined worth, not "hierarchy." But it is invaluable to remember, men were in charge. As Devine notes, "identifying women as helpers assured men of their masculinity as they adjusted to the relative ease of mechanized farm work."<sup>199</sup> There were also matters of ancient ownership laws and who had rights to land when it came to inheritance; the felt need was that women needed men to survive in the rural landscape because of the interdependent way of life and the way the system was built. After WWII, there was a tension of finding one's voice and role in a man's world, but in the historical accounts, it is not categorized as tension. Rather, this was just the way of life. And in this life, women found ways to use their voices and abilities in clubs and auxiliaries. These arenas allowed them to move into the public arena and still embrace their interdependence in their families. Devine again describes this phenomenon, "Patriarchy remained firmly entrenched in the countryside, and few women offered direct challenges to male

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<sup>198</sup> Devine, *On Behalf*, 87.

<sup>199</sup> Devine, *On Behalf*, 9.

privilege because doing so undermined the social networks vital to small communities.”<sup>200</sup> The community was worth fighting for in their view.

Because of this interdependent mutuality that was foundational to the communities of farming cultures, feminism as a label was not embraced: “Their main objections during the 1970s were not based on threats to the nuclear family but rather on the inference that women lacked work experience. Many farm women asserted that they had always been liberated by their participation on family farms.”<sup>201</sup> Again, community is the focus along with the work entailed in these communities. They had always labored and, as Osterud points out, all women had a say in farm decisions at least in the New York region of her research. Dairy farms especially required everyone to do their part because it was so demanding.<sup>202</sup> She continues to point out the distinction of fighting for communal interdependence versus individual destiny writing, “Neither farmers nor caregivers – much less women who are both – suffer from the illusion that individuals are the masters of their own destiny.”<sup>203</sup> Devine also summarizes the importance of their position on rejecting the label of feminism because they possessed a special knowledge not valued by the feminists who were removed from communal life: “They were stewards of the land, of resources, of food, and ultimately democracy. As women, they worked not for individual achievement or notoriety but for one simple goal – to save the family farm and thereby ensure the preservation of a fundamental American institution.”<sup>204</sup> Despite rejecting the label of

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<sup>200</sup> Devine, *On Behalf*, 9.

<sup>201</sup> Devine, *On Behalf*, 9-10.

<sup>202</sup> Grey Osterud, *Putting the Barn Before the House: Women and Family Farming in Early Twentieth-Century New York* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2012), 4-5.

<sup>203</sup> Osterud, *Putting*, 46.

<sup>204</sup> Devine, *On Behalf*, 14.

feminism, they used their voices and stood up for themselves and their families. Ownership laws began to shift in the 60s and 70s and finally in the 1980s major changes were seen. This was when the farm crisis saw low commodity prices meeting high interest rates and many farms foreclosing because of it. During this time women, again, were agents of change in high pressure times.

The focus on individuality and competition came at a great cost to farming communities. Rural life depended on mutuality, cooperatives, and support of one another and when this was threatened, women rose to defend it across the country. Also, the mid-twentieth century was a time when people were doing things differently than their parents – moving to cities, no longer farming, moving towards monocultures, and learning new production technologies. These matters along with the advent of processed food and new appliances shifted the home culture too. Home-work looked a little different. Home gardening and animal keeping declined, “but women continued to work as field workers, live-stock handlers, bookkeepers, farm managers, errand runners, wage earners off the farm, and even political activists.”<sup>205</sup> Further, housework was not looked down upon as women were contributing to something larger than themselves. Not everyone could be a teacher or nurse, and this was a way community life continued. As Jones points out, the women she interviewed were insulted by being boxed in by labels. They were not “feminists” just as they were not “farm wives” because they said they were not “married to a farm.”<sup>206</sup> They valued mothering as a necessity of community. Most importantly, they had relationship to the land in their personal agency. Women might not have been listed on titles, but they found real value in their living history in the land and in their communities. They knew their

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<sup>205</sup> Devine, *On Behalf*, 5.

<sup>206</sup> Osterud, *Putting*, 48-49.



worth in the stories of how they came to farming, left it, or how the places they lived shaped their lives.

Of course, over time speaking up and advocating for their communities has led to change despite not embracing the term feminism. Whether one categorizes it as volunteerism, mutuality, patriotism, or feminism, women from all different backgrounds are always advocating for their communities. Women have demonstrated prominent and visible agriculture leadership since the Women's Land Army in WWI until women were finally counted in the agricultural census in 1978. But changes in recognition and being counted are just now getting the attention they deserve.

### **Present Day**

This summary of history brings me to 2007, when something profound happened when the agricultural census took place in the United States.<sup>207</sup> Women in farming proved once again they were a *tour de force* and people needed to pay attention. There were several reasons for this. The primary one being, for the first time, this census form allowed two principle operators (head of farm) to be listed. Years prior, the forms only allowed for one person to be listed as principle operator. Due to only having one space, oftentimes women who were wives or partners were not accounted for in a formal capacity. After this change, as well as assessing trends in the field, the numbers jumped significantly showing an increase in women who farm in the last 25 years. The 2007 United States agricultural fact sheet on women reported 14% of principle operators and

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<sup>207</sup> The USDA conducts a census of US farms and ranches every five years. A farm or ranch is counted if they sell more than \$1,000 of products a year and has nothing to do with farm size. "2012 Census of Agriculture: United States Summary and State Data," U.S. Department of Agriculture, Geographic Area Series, Part 51, VII, accessed December 13, 2017. [https://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/Full\\_Report/Volume\\_1,\\_Chapter\\_1\\_US/usv1.pdf](https://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/Full_Report/Volume_1,_Chapter_1_US/usv1.pdf)

30% of total farm operators (middle management) were women.<sup>208</sup> The Department of Agriculture turned this information into a much more detailed study and what they found was a capitalistic contradiction. Eighty percent of women-run operations are considered small farms. This means they have sales of \$10,000 or less;<sup>209</sup> with government payments and total sales, 90% of the farms women run are operating with less than \$50,000 a year. In reading the reports from the U.S. Department of Agriculture dating back to 2001, money appears to be the driving force of reporting and assessing the farms, but not for women.

Judith Sommer, reporting for the Department of Agriculture in 2001, noted that females were running smaller farms with smaller resources. They had negative net income and relied heavily on off-farm jobs, but despite these reasons, everything pointed to a “growing presence of women” in farming.<sup>210</sup> She was right, as the growth was seen in the 2007 report. But the 2013 report titled “Characteristics of Women Farm Operators and Their Farms” by the government still appeared to not understand the entire picture of women farmers. The report elaborates, “For example, consider the -4.0 percent rate of return on equity for women who operate farms with sales less than \$10,000. From the perspective of current income generation it would seem more rational for these operators to sell the farm and place the proceeds in certificates of deposit

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<sup>208</sup> “2007 Census of Agriculture: Women Farmers,” U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1, accessed May 8, 2014. [http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Online\\_Highlights/Fact\\_Sheets/Demographics/women.pdf](http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2007/Online_Highlights/Fact_Sheets/Demographics/women.pdf)

<sup>209</sup> Robert A. Hoppe, and Penni Korb, “Characteristics of Women Farm Operators and Their Farms,” EIB-111, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service, April 2013, 14.

<sup>210</sup> Judith E. Sommer “Female Farm Operators and Their Farms,” in Structural and Financial Characteristics of U.S. Farms: 2001 Family Farm Report, ed. Robert A. Hoppe, Resource Economics Division, Economic Research Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture. Agriculture Information Bulletin No. 768, 50.

paying low – but positive – interest.”<sup>211</sup> But despite this puzzlement, women continue to be a strong force in agriculture. Why is there growth in a field requiring hard work, diversified ventures, and little monetary gain? One explanation from Hoppe and Korb details, “There are benefits from farming that are not included in measures like current net farm income and return on equity.”<sup>212</sup> The list they give includes write offs, long-term capital gains, and the inheritance of land to children or heirs. There is only a simple mention in one sentence of women valuing the lifestyle farming allows them to have.

This lifestyle includes the way these farmers run their operations. From crops to livestock, their farms are more diverse than their male counterparts as women are shifting away from monocultures and beef cattle operations.<sup>213</sup> Despite being small, they are finding value in running varied environments. Rather than the monetary issues deterring women, growth of women in this field is still being reported. For instance, when Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) models were introduced and first counted, there were 60 registered in 1990. The latest numbers, though, count CSAs at over 12,600 with women making up 51% of CSA owners.<sup>214</sup>

While the recently released 2012 US agricultural census reported no change in the numbers (principle operators who are women remain at 14%), it is significant for the numbers to remain stable and not lose ground in a farming industry where men are leaving quicker than women and reporting loss of numbers. This is also evidenced in the growth of the Women Food

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<sup>211</sup> Hoppe and Korb, “Characteristics of Women,” 14.

<sup>212</sup> Hoppe and Korb, “Characteristics of Women,” 14.

<sup>213</sup> “2007 Census of Agriculture: Women Farmers,” 3.

<sup>214</sup> Lisa Kivirist, *Soil Sisters: A Toolkit for Women Farmers* (Gabriola Island, BC, Canada: New Society Publishers, 2016), 18.

and Agricultural Network (WFAN). Denise O'Brien founded WFAN in 1997. By 2008, she had 300 members. However, today there are more than 4,000 women involved all over the globe, but predominately in the U.S.<sup>215</sup>

The acceptance of low income for exchange of values is significant and points to a shift worth noticing. Popular media has reported on women in farming over the course of the last five years in light of this growth. Their reports do not always paint a rosy picture though. Take Lindsey Morris Carpenter's story. She is running a CSA program in Wisconsin. The community is very supportive, but despite that, because of her values of keeping her produce accessible and affordable, her take home pay is \$1.75 an hour.<sup>216</sup> In another story, Joannee DeBruhl of Michigan relies on her husband's business of restoring barns in order to supplement her farm income that she co-owns with Shannon Rau. "It's one of those things that you learn to enjoy different things, and for me, money is not a huge concern as doing what I love doing," said Rau. "It's a romantic view on it, but that's how I feel about it."<sup>217</sup> Ellen Walsh-Rosmann is in a similar position, too. She runs Pin Oak Place, a 10-acre farmstead, in Iowa, but she is also struggling to make ends meet and deal with her own health issues after trying various ways of Community Supported Agriculture and selling wholesale in a neighboring state.<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> Sena Christian, "Think You Know What a Farmer Looks Like? Think Again," [yesmagazine.org](http://www.yesmagazine.org/new-economy/think-you-know-what-a-farmer-looks-like-think-again), April 17, 2014, accessed May 3, 2014, <http://www.yesmagazine.org/new-economy/think-you-know-what-a-farmer-looks-like-think-again>.

<sup>216</sup> Christian, "Think You Know."

<sup>217</sup> Patricia Montemurri, "More Women Finding Passion as Farmers," *USA Today*, September 29, 2013, accessed May 3, 2014, <http://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2013/09/29/more-women-finding-passion-as-farmers/2888617/>.

<sup>218</sup> Christian, "Think You Know."

Farming is no easy task to take up or keep going. It begs the questions: What keeps these women going in the morning? Who would voluntarily sign up for a job where profit loss is virtually inevitable and the government report on the industry published it would be wise to do something else with one's money? If money is the basis of farming, that would make sense, but there is something deeper going on here.

A few academic studies have explored these questions. In Andrea Rising's research of women operating CSA farms, her outcomes make sense as to why women are encouraged and empowered working this type of smaller, less conventional farm. The study indicates motivations from these women such as desiring a decentralized model, independence, community, harmony with nature, and diversity of people and crops. Those are the most common reasons, but also included are quality family life and spirituality.<sup>219</sup>

Laura DeLind and Anne Ferguson notice similar characteristics in the study of their own CSA project. Women in their focus groups inspired their research by asking the question, "Is this [CSA] a women's movement?" (which ended up being the title of their study). By sampling focus groups of both genders, they deem their CSA a women's movement by using Ackelsberg's definition: "For many women, politics is community life; politics is attending to the quality of life in households, communities, and workplace."<sup>220</sup> Once again by embracing the embodiment of the work instead of being silenced by it, they are reshaping the home front; they inspire a different way of labor and seek a deeper vocation. Their personal becomes political as they

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<sup>219</sup> Andrea L. Rising, "Iowan Women Farmers' Perspectives on Alternative Agriculture and Gender," *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development* 3, no. 2 (Winter 2012–2013): 128, accessed May 3, 2014, <http://dx.doi.org/10.5304/jafscd.2013.032.008>.

<sup>220</sup> Laura B. DeLind, and Anne E. Ferguson, "Is This a Women's Movement? The Relationship of Gender to Community-Supported Agriculture in Michigan," *Human Organization* 58, no. 2 (Summer 1999): 196, accessed May 3, 2014, ProQuest Research Library.

recognize the power in their labor. But it does so, not through feminist rhetoric, but through the farm work. Their practice and mutual relationships with their surroundings inform their advocacy theory.

The CSA confirms itself as a place fulfilling women's experiences, needs, and capabilities in DeLind and Ferguson's study as well. This is demonstrated by women doing the bulk of sustainability work versus the men. The value for the women is found in doing the work amongst others not unto or over others. The interrelationships stressed are found in resisting forms of capitalism together, which the men want as well, but the women want a more diverse environment. For the women, this means seeking value in learning from migrant workers and people from other socio economic backgrounds. The men, on the other hand, desire a more homogenous environment in this instance. Working alongside others for the females is also about embodiment in wanting to touch the soil and get dirty – something the males do not talk about as their means of labor is about getting a job done. No more is the web of relationship and equality shown than in the comment of one woman interviewee describing the community “as hundreds of thread-like mycelium continually moving into new areas (spatial, social and spiritual), establishing lateral connections and networks of interdependence.”<sup>221</sup> In this way, they desire not only to resist degradation and impersonal structures, but be proactive in relation to their values in their embodiment of working on the farm. The researchers report, “It included feelings of peacefulness, of belonging, and of ‘hope against fear.’ In essence, it created new possibilities for growing community as well as food.”<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> DeLind and Ferguson, “Is This a Women's Movement,” 196.

<sup>222</sup> DeLind and Ferguson, “Is This a Women's Movement,” 197.

Most recently, Clare Hintz's research in 2015 of female farmers in the US also discusses these qualities of relationality in farming and defines an "ecology of love" as what motivates and connects these women to their ecosystems.<sup>223</sup> Of the fourteen women she interacts with in her study, she again echoes what others have said in the current literature of motivations being different for these women. She begins by noting literature on farming and agriculture rarely mention actual farmers. Further, farming narratives become pastoral placing the writer as an observer. Most often the stories represented are male. She echoes my criticism, too, that Berry and Jackson are the go-to voices in farming and pastoral narratives. Her narrative ethnographic research characterizes the women in deep relationship to the land. They consider themselves as part of a whole, not above it.

The use of ecology in Hintz's title makes sense here. The ecosystems which are part of ecology place humans in relationship to their environments and contexts, too. "Ecosystem," as defined by Jerry Melillo and Osvaldo Sala, "is the sum total of all the organisms in a specific environment and their interactions with each other and with the nonliving components of that environment."<sup>224</sup> The interactions of an ecosystem consist of four different services: Provisioning, Regulating, Cultural, and Supporting.<sup>225</sup> Ecologists look at these patterns of relations in these consumer-resource services and behaviors and sense the wholeness of a place and its energy. The emphasis in ecological writing is on relationships and energy in environmental systems, but the spiritual is neglected. As mentioned in chapter one, spiritual

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<sup>223</sup> Clare Hintz, "An Ecology of Love: Women Farmers, Sense of Place, the Georgic Ethic, and Ecocentricity," *Journal of Sustainability Education* 9 (March 2015), 7.

<sup>224</sup> Jerry Melillo and Osvaldo Sala, "Ecosystem Services," in *Sustaining Life: How Human Health Depends on Biodiversity*, ed. Eric Chivian and Aaron Bernstein (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 77.

<sup>225</sup> Melillo and Sala, "Ecosystem Services," 76.

ecology tries to champion this conversation, but then moves too far away from understanding the science of ecology. Hintz tries to remedy this conundrum. She introduces the label of spirituality in her work. She quotes a number of farmers who see their work as spiritual. But she does not define this term. Spirituality is seen in what one might describe as awe-inspiring or something indescribable, but she stops short of actually explaining it. For instance, she writes,

Several of the farmers described their connection to their land in spiritual terms. 'The animals on the land, I just love looking out that window there when I'm washing dishes and seeing the goats and sheep just out pasturing. Just what it provides for us. Is my connection, I love it here. I don't know if I can fully explain why, but it's just so peaceful to me. It's a lot of hard work in the summer when I am full speed ahead there's days I don't take the time to look out the window or look out when I'm out there working and say, 'Wow this is really beautiful.' Because you're just so busy. But, I just love being here. It's got a spirit about it.'<sup>226</sup>

Again and again, farmers describe spirituality as awe, connection to the soil, land, plants, and animals, and the relationship of their senses to a place. The farm is not separate from their being and as one person put it, "I feel, the cliffs up there-- it's a spiritual thing to me. It feeds me in a way more than just the physical food that comes out of it."<sup>227</sup> They are bonded to this work, but again, describing spirituality ends with a wonderment and period (.) instead of a definition or analysis of what this type of spiritual formation really means or entails.

As we build on the argument for a spiritual formation lens of working with the land from chapters one and two, the model of Schaab's paradigm of midwifery assists here in grounding an embodied spiritual ecofeminist framework in terms of advocacy, education and care. In conjunction with Carolyn Merchant's partnership ethics from the previous chapter, one can begin to see a way forward through the destruction and exploitation into the work of resurrection.

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<sup>226</sup> Hintz, "An Ecology," 7.

<sup>227</sup> Hintz, "An Ecology," 3.



The six areas of this midwife code of care - respectful treatment, personal attention, acquisition and dissemination of information, and embracing the roles of monitor, advocate, and companion – demonstrate education, nurture, but also direction, expertise, and respect. This theological lens on ethical actions of working alongside the Divine within the web of life speaks of the panentheistic view discussed earlier. It also “asserts that God’s creative activity extends not only to the full flourishing of creation’s human emergents but also ceaselessly labors in, with, and under the processes of the cosmos for the healing, salvation, transformation, and liberation of the whole cosmos itself.”<sup>228</sup> By reclaiming the work of this healing and advocacy paradigm, we can see not only environmental ethics and theology in a new way, but the efforts of women in farming, both historically and presently, embodying a deeper purpose.

However, this also comes with a cautionary tale as well as future steps forward. In embracing the model of the midwife – one of assistance and resistance – it is important to realize a midwife is normally either part of a culture or hired by someone to be an advocate. She does not put herself into a situation without knowing the context and history of the mother. This can be seen in Chaone Mallory’s study of her own neighborhood in Philadelphia where the CSA there is predominately run and supported by white women in a racially segregated area. She pointedly asks after seeing her homogenous local market, “Are proponents of local foods mistaken about the relational and civic power of local foods, or are they simply starry-eyed idealists, blind to important considerations regarding who does — and does not — feel a sense of

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<sup>228</sup> Gloria L. Schaab, “Midwifery as a Model for Ecological Ethics: Expanding Arthur Peacocke’s Models of ‘Man-in-Creation,’” *Zygon* 42 no. 2 (June 2007): 493, accessed Feb. 22, 2014.  
<http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=rh&AN=ATLA0001583888&site=ehost-live>

belonging in the movement to ‘buy fresh buy local’?”<sup>229</sup> Her question echoes Bass’ concerns in chapter one concerning being caught up so much in eating good food that justice is overlooked.

If we are to not be blind and actually become midwives for the sake of our communities and farms, we must ground ourselves in place – in our own communities – as many of the women in this chapter have done. However, this does not mean closing ourselves off from the larger national or global dialogues. Rather, as Mallory argues, by being in place we can embrace and embody the culture and ecology to define our ethics and have more of a voice in shaping activism, policy, and communities. An ecofeminist partnership ethic coupled with an agricultural spirituality is central to this challenge because it not only notices the oppression of powerful systems, but provides space to lament, confront, and reconcile with different parts of the web of life in a place. “It is typical in all social movements for social change to initially want to address issues separately, but ecofeminism allows us to think of the social and the ecological together, and to understand that they must be addressed together to be addressed at all,” Mallory argues.<sup>230</sup> Taking Mallory’s words to heart means recognizing the women who farm in the United States still have the cards stacked against them; people of color even more so. Where women are concerned, it is a job where financial gain is not the driving force and values of community and sustainability as well as personal motivations are central. But this also comes with a dose of privilege, too, of who gets to do this work when it comes to land ownership, partners with better paying jobs, grant money, and other streams of income. There are issues like these and others that time will not allow to discuss here. But drawing on spiritual formation and partnership ethics

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<sup>229</sup> Mallory, “Locating Ecofeminism,” 174.

<sup>230</sup> Mallory, “Locating Ecofeminism,” 187.

as a sustaining energy, important nuances are added to the literature and conversations in the fields of ecology, agriculture, and ecofeminism that still need to be examined.

The “her”stories of women farmers in the US provide strong examples of this partnership ethic from all eras. More are needed today though. As seen in the last year with one of the most divisive elections in recent history, there is work to be done to build bridges across mythical and actual urban/rural, political, and religious divides. The examples we can look to start with the ecosystems we are in and the people and other life forms who have survived in their environments despite exploitation and abuse. This is as true of women and children in the world as it is of resources and how “midwives” have come to their aid and advocacy. Finding these stories and positioning myself as a learner is just a starting place to continue to work towards this lens of planting seeds of partnership, restoration, and resurrection. By diving into narrative research, an important methodology emerges which brings together partnership and advocacy in the actual research which will be explored in the following chapters.

## PART II

SEED: Narratives, the Methods and the Stories

## Chapter 4

### Research Methodology

To bring more stories of women in farming and their spiritual formation of working with the land to the forefront, a research methodology must be crafted in order to expose and understand the complexity of an environment and its relationships in certain temporal instances. Narrative Inquiry is the main method of this dissertation. Aspects of Participant Action Research, with an eco/feminist participant research lens, are also used to advocate for women in farming with regards to partnering with different church denominations. This chapter will define each method and how they work together in this study.

#### **Narrative Inquiry**

Narrative Inquiry (NI) seeks to understand “stories as data.”<sup>231</sup> This is understood by exploring the three core aspects of NI as introduced by Jean Clandinin: relationality, continuity, and sociality. In this way, NI is not meant to evaluate stories for long-term understanding, rather this method is about exposing and understanding the complexity of an environment and its relationships in certain temporal instances. This begins with recognizing that, “Narrative inquiry, is situated in relationship and in community, and it attends to notions of expertise and knowing in relational and participatory ways.”<sup>232</sup> The researcher must enter in the midst of lives and build relationships with the participants. This means asking broad questions and letting the participants explain what they would like; it also helps to participate in the community of the participants as much as possible. Doing research in person to build these relationships is vital to this experience

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<sup>231</sup> D. Jean Clandinin, *Engaging in Narrative Inquiry* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, 2013), 11.

<sup>232</sup> Clandinin, *Engaging*, 13.

rather than using technology. When bodies share space and a researcher's senses participate in the collection of data and stories – especially when studying farms and ecosystems – the place becomes part of the research and relationship as well.

Building from relationality in narrative research, one must also look to Clandinin's other foundational points of continuity and sociality. What she details is the notion of historicity influencing the processes being explored in the study and the sociality factors of culture, family, environment and place all shaping how one lives.<sup>233</sup> This means that a researcher must examine and reflect on matters of subjectivity, storytelling, co-construction, voice, and action within the relationship, continuity, and social realms of the subject at hand and in her own life.

One of the most significant features of NI is seeking meaning in subjective experience. Certainty and objectivity are not the goal in NI research; rather, a story is illustrated of how people embody their values in life.<sup>234</sup> The stories and experiences of the participants reveal cultural and social life choices through the telling, as Catherine Riessman establishes in her book *Narrative Analysis*. To critics who might say, "Narrative inquiry is too subjective." Riesmann would say, "Yes! Exactly!"<sup>235</sup> The truth is found not in objectivity, but in the subjective context of the moment. Why are the participants telling the story this way? What do the pauses, body language, and situation demonstrate? How is the researcher part of the experience of explaining the story? What contexts have shaped what the participants are sharing? Narrative is about making meaning of experiences, not prescribing conclusions. Also, by addressing *the way* stories

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<sup>233</sup> Clandinin, *Engaging*, 17.

<sup>234</sup> Clandinin, *Engaging*, 51.

<sup>235</sup> Catherine Kohler Riessman, *Narrative Analysis*, Qualitative Research Methods 30 (London: SAGE Publications, 1993), 5.

are told, the researcher understands subjectivity is not just about the story, context, or research design, but the way the interview and interactions take place.

NI factors history, culture, and even body movements and unspoken into the research. As Riessman states, “Narrators create plots from disordered experiences” to give value to those experiences.<sup>236</sup> The past shapes who we are and always connects experiences to more experiences.<sup>237</sup> Therefore, it could be said that NI seeks to understand *the why* of a person’s modalities in a season instead of a finite state. Understanding what is happening in a certain season of life is valuable in this case as women have not been able to account for their stories being told in the history of farming. By listening to their subjective stories as well as taking in their bodily experiences, a meaningful look can be taken at why this work is important in their individual contexts. NI focuses its energy on meaning-making of the action already occurring where PAR and FPR focus on action yet to be taken, as will be discussed later.

Speaking to the need for narrative research to embrace actual bodies – actual subjects –, Lars-Christer Hyden argues for inquiries to include more than just cognitive noticings. Hyden’s focus is on differently-abled people whose way of being in the world mainly happens in their bodies, not in their minds. In a different, but similar vein, to interview farmers or laborers and not see the work they are doing in their bodies would be to miss part of the experience. Hyden writes, “The body is used in exploring the world by looking, touching, listening, and moving around, as well as in acting in the world: speaking, grabbing, walking, and so on. In a sense the limits of the body are to a certain degree also the limits of the world – at least the lived world.”<sup>238</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> Riessman, *Narrative Analysis*, 4.

<sup>237</sup> Clandinin, *Engaging*, 16.

<sup>238</sup> Lars-Christer Hyden, “Bodies, Embodiment, and Stories,” in *Doing Narrative Research*, ed. Molly Andrews, Corinne Squire, and Maria Tamboukou, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: SAGE Publications, 2013), 128.

The encouragement is clear, to understand experience in NI, researchers must not just listen, but see body position and gestures, and remember the experience of their senses. For instance, the work of someone's body – of weeding, planting, digging, carrying – is all part of the journey of being a farmer, albeit subjective.

Moving from subjects to the experiential stories they tell and live into is an important aspect of narrative research. Seeking to dive into experiences is a way to explore change and interdisciplinary capacities in certain contexts. It is not about focusing just on an event, as noted researcher William Labov contends. My reason for using experience and relational-based NI over event-based research is articulated by Corinne Squire. She illustrates that stories are never told the same way twice – they change with each telling. This allows for multiple interpretations and angles in research which can be seen as a benefit. But when we take the event at face value and do not consider the changing nature of the way stories are told, we limit the research.<sup>239</sup> By taking account of the telling of the story, the relationships and the context, once again, the unspoken elements appear in the research as well - body language, pauses, setting – all of which Labov neglects.

This act of not only telling stories, but also exploring *how* we tell stories, is what makes us human. Stories connect us to the past and future. Experience-based narrative frameworks, therefore, re-present experience and display transformation or change in a person's journey. This could mean categorizing one's journey chronologically, but when discussing a person's vocation, it is of equal importance to utilize description and theorizing for the purpose of making meaning

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<sup>239</sup> Corinne Squire, "From Experience-Centered to Socioculturally-Oriented Approaches to Narrative," in *Doing Narrative Research*, ed. Molly Andrews, Corinne Squire, and Maria Tamboukou, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: SAGE Publications, 2013), 47.



of human experiences.<sup>240</sup> Thus, identity, even if it is malleable, is a focus of narrative shaped by place and time, as narratives cannot be separated from the places that formed them.

Furthermore, allowing for the context to shape the stories, as well as the audience, gives more attention to the relationship being built in the research by the researcher and environment. In other words, the matter of who is listening and co-constructing the retelling of the stories is just as important as the story.<sup>241</sup> It is valuable to explore elements of relationship, context, journey, and truth that can shed light on what is happening with participants of the research. However, this must be couched in the unfolding context of the relationship of the researcher and participant. As Clandinin emphasizes, this relationship methodology unites lives and stories.<sup>242</sup> Therefore, exploring the stories of the women I interviewed is as important as my own transformation as well. Their stories and my story overlap adding complexity and multiplicity to the research.

The layers of complexity are vital in NI, just as they are in what follows in Participant Action Research and Feminist Participant Research, as they provide angles for multiple interpretations. Clandinin again points out the beneficial nature of this type of study that comes alongside participants and allows for partnership instead of isolation.<sup>243</sup> Researching in this way can be collaborative, as Josselson underscores. Instead of only a researcher's voice solely telling the stories, this research aims to showcase the participants in the study as the experts of their own

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<sup>240</sup> Squire, "From Experience," 48.

<sup>241</sup> Riessman, *Narrative*, 8; Clandinin, *Engaging*, 24, 50; Christine Bold, *Using Narrative in Research* (London: SAGE Publications, 2012), 54; all of them discuss co-construction.

<sup>242</sup> Clandinin, *Engaging*, 135.

<sup>243</sup> Clandinin, *Engaging*, 141.

lives.<sup>244</sup> This is done by stressing what is the voice of the researcher, what are the researcher's interpretations, and being transparent about those choices. Furthermore, in this process, it is important to return to the participants over the course of the study with the stories and transcriptions to see if they feel like they are accurately represented (this will be explained in more detail in the research design section of chapter five). At many points, multiplicity and collaboration are embraced in the process as integral.<sup>245</sup> With these many layers, the importance of trust is emphasized as I walk alongside the participants as we shape a narrative for a broader audience of why this issue is important; a narrative that does not seek to simplify, but rather, represent.

Representing and framing important issues is part of the NI process as well in order to move people to action. Christine Bold comments on the critical analysis and reflection in narrative when the reflection is rooted *in, on, and for*, action.<sup>246</sup> This last idea of reflection "for action" is vital to understanding the social justice/activist approach of utilizing narrative research methods to draw attention to a group of people on the margins. Because lives are rooted in societies and cultures, there is no way to avoid political and cultural actions stemming from the research. As Squire addresses, "[Participants] build collective identities that can lead, albeit slowly and discontinuously, to cultural shifts and political change. Personal stories thus often operate as bids for representation and power from the disenfranchised."<sup>247</sup> Therefore, telling these stories is not only about reflection on the nature of the participants, but hopefully

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<sup>244</sup> Ruthellen Josselson, "The Ethical Attitude in Narrative Research," in *Handbook of Narrative Inquiry: Mapping a Methodology*, ed. D. Jean Clandinin (London: SAGE Publications, 2007), 548.

<sup>245</sup> Clandinin, *Engaging*, 49.

<sup>246</sup> Bold, *Using Narrative*, 2-3.

<sup>247</sup> Squire, "From Experience," 62.

inspiration to continue to change oppressive systems to be more supportive of what participants desire. At its core, Participant Action Research advocates for action and change, too, which will be explored in conjunction with NI for this research.

### **Participant Action Research**

The founding of Participant Action Research (PAR) is often credited to Kurt Lewin, the father of social psychology. Lewin presented a different framework during the mid-twentieth century that countered the then-popular Freudian personality ideas. Action Research examines the way environmental influences impact behavior, which contradicts the notion of personality being at the root of all of our actions.<sup>248</sup> From there, many social scientists and educators have embraced action research in the following tenets: PAR seeks to investigate problems, gain clarity about issues, engage in seeking solutions, and build alliances to act for the sake of said problems all while partnering the researcher with the participants.<sup>249</sup>

PAR gained significant ground when Brazilian educator Paulo Freire developed his own pedagogy around social construction in the 1970s. His directions are clear: If one seeks to conduct research, the people one wants to work with must not be passive objects in the study. He understands research is not reductionist science which would like to distance one's self from the objects being studied in order to gain "pure" results. He realizes there is no true form of pure research. From how it is designed, to the questions asked, subjectivity and objectivity are always linked.<sup>250</sup>

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<sup>248</sup> Hilary Bradbury, et al., "Action Research at Work: Creating the Future Following the Path from Lewin" in *SAGE Handbook of Action Research*, ed. Peter Reason and Hilary Bradbury (London: SAGE Publications, 2008), 78

<sup>249</sup> Alice McIntyre, *Participatory Action Research* (London: SAGE Publications, 2007), 1.

Knowing subjectivity and objectivity are linked then leads to different questions being asked of a study, similar to NI's aims as well. Behind PAR is a drive to contribute holistic flourishing in human's lives. As Hilary Bradbury and Peter Reason write, "Action research activities are usually driven by personal commitments to contribute to human flourishing, and these commitments are informed by an intellectual orientation that is systemic or aware of interdependencies, emancipatory, critical and participatory. There is a wholeness about action research practice so that knowledge is always gained in and through action."<sup>251</sup> PAR seeks to act in partnering theory and practice for the sake of bettering relationships in a community. Everyday-knowledge is championed instead of an intimidating framework of expert-driven science. The researcher and researched are constantly collaborating, with the researcher positioning one's self as the learner as much as possible. The participants are the experts in their context and the goals and aims, as will be covered in more detail later, are to breakdown bureaucratic and technocratic Western research models that would distance people from the research. This creates privileged ways of knowing, and keeps research separate from life experience.<sup>252</sup>

Furthermore, PAR has the ability to notice the web of life beyond humans by not placing research outside of the ecological and biological connections in life. One must locate the research in time, place, and relationship. In doing so, PAR research projects seek to challenge dualisms and include environment and religiosity as valuable because God/the Divine-

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<sup>250</sup> Paulo Freire, "Creating Alternative Research Methods: Learning to Do It by Doing It," in *Creating Knowledge: A Monopoly?*, ed. Budd L. Hall, et al. (New Delhi: Society for Participatory Research in Asia, 1982), 29-30, 32.

<sup>251</sup> Hilary Bradbury and Peter Reason, "Introduction to Groundings," in *SAGE Handbook of Action Research*, ed. Peter Reason and Hilary Bradbury (London: SAGE Publications, 2008), 11.

<sup>252</sup> Marja Liisa Swantz, "Participatory Action Research as Practice," in *SAGE Handbook of Action Research*, ed. Peter Reason and Hilary Bradbury (London: SAGE Publications, 2008), 45.

relationships are part of the web as well. Therefore, experience and relationship are at the heart of PAR research just as in NI.

With experience and relationship as a guide, one can enter into the process of conducting PAR research. The steps can be broken down into social investigation, education and action with the intention of working towards transformation according to Patricia Maguire.<sup>253</sup> To do this building relationships and trust is vital in the community one is working. The first aspect of PAR must include the researcher positioning one's self as a learner and collaborator. The role of the researcher is to mutually develop knowledge alongside those in a community.<sup>254</sup> The work can include previous research (if any), reports, statistics, and historical documents when necessary, but also needs to rely on actively working with those in the community to shape the actual research and outcomes.<sup>255</sup> The point is to be as transparent as possible with every step of research.

This begins with the questions one asks of the issues in a community. The problems are not identified by the researcher, but by the participants.<sup>256</sup> There are multiple examples in the

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<sup>253</sup> Patricia Maguire, *Doing Participatory Research: A Feminist Approach* (Amherst, MA: UMass Center for Int'l Education/School of Education, 1987), 3.

<sup>254</sup> Swantz, "Participatory," 33, 38.

<sup>255</sup> McIntyre, *Participatory*, 20; Freire, "Creating," 31.

<sup>256</sup> Questions in McIntyre's processes, as quoted by her:

- What do you perceive as a problem or an issue in your community that needs to be addressed?
- How does it relate to your life? To the community's life?
- Why do these issues/problems exist? What can we do about them?
- What do we need to know? What do we already know?
- What resources do we need to proceed with the project?
- How will this project benefit the participants and the rest of the community?
- What are the common themes that have been generated in the research process?
- How do we summarize these themes in ways that benefit those involved?
- Who will control the research project? Make decisions? Decide how to disseminate information to others?
- How will we address issues of confidentiality in the dissemination of the information we gather?

literature of different PAR projects. McIntyre collaborated with an inner-city sixth grade class to construct meaning of the violence in their community. The focus on violence was the choice of the students.<sup>257</sup> Freire mentions the United Republic of Tanzania wanting to create a socialist society. This then must be motivated by the people, not put upon them by administrators or politicians.<sup>258</sup> At the root of the participants choosing the issues to focus on is a homing in on the context of the community for the purpose of education and not production. Instead of being told what to learn, the learners become the researchers, examining what the people care about and want help with.<sup>259</sup> Therefore, choosing a particular locale is important where one can focus on a group of individuals and institutions that are important to them.<sup>260</sup>

After time has been spent choosing the problem to focus on from the perspective of the participants, data collection can begin to shape action and transformation. This can involve interviews, focus groups, and teams of people speaking into the project. It can also involve more than just words. For instance, McIntyre gave cameras to participants to catalogue the story of their lives visually. She found it particularly empowering to the quieter parties involved in the project.<sup>261</sup> The point is, this is the stage where the researcher must listen. As Maguire explains,

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- How will we inform others about the project?
  - Will our research represent only the realities of those involved or those of other members of the community/group as well?
  - What are the criteria we will use to assess the adequacy and efficacy of the project?"
- McIntyre, *Participatory*, 50.

<sup>257</sup> McIntyre, *Participatory*, x.

<sup>258</sup> Freire, "Creating," 32.

<sup>259</sup> Freire, "Creating," 31.

<sup>260</sup> Freire, "Creating," 32.

<sup>261</sup> McIntyre, *Participatory*, 24.

“what’s the point of promoting and celebrating ‘voice’ if we’re not really listening? I have to remind myself to consider, whose voices are missing? Who couldn’t get into the space? What do the silences say?”<sup>262</sup> All of this then moves into embracing reflexivity, another vital aspect of PAR and NI.

Once the initial interviews and focus groups about the issues have taken place, the researcher compiles transcripts and summaries of the events. That material is given directly to the participants to review and correct or clarify where necessary.<sup>263</sup> This reflexivity can and should be done before analyzing the data as well as after. The process of dialogue and collaboration is constant, as this work is the work of the participants just as much as the researcher. Another aspect of reflexivity is not only inviting dialogue and reflection on the part of the participants, but the researcher must return again and again to her own role as well. Maguire again explains, “You must listen to yourself. Pay attention to the voice within you that signals something’s not right here. Pay attention to your annoyances and discomforts.”<sup>264</sup> One must be aware of her own biography, biases, and expectations because those inclinations inform how the research is conducted and analyzed.<sup>265</sup>

As the process continues, McIntyre suggests the use of grounded theory open coding to analyze the data. When looking at the transcripts, it is a way to develop conceptual categories that arise directly from the data instead of imposing our lens on it. Now, of course, this is the researchers take on the coding, but again, this then is an opportunity for the researcher to

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<sup>262</sup> Maguire, *Doing Participatory*, xvi-xvii.

<sup>263</sup> McIntyre, *Participatory*, 53.

<sup>264</sup> Maguire, *Doing Participatory*, xvii.

<sup>265</sup> McIntyre, *Participatory*, 8.

dialogue with the participants about the codes as well as reflect on their role throughout the process.<sup>266</sup> As Freire suggests, this is as much about the researcher's learning as it is the participants. He writes,

Thus, in doing research, I am educating and being educated with the people. By returning to the area in order to put into practice the results of my investigation, I am not only educating and being educated; I am also researching again, because to the extent that we put into practice the plans resulting from the investigation, we change the levels of consciousness of the people, and by this change, we do research again. Thus there is a dynamic movement between researching and acting on the results of the research.<sup>267</sup>

The constant dialogue and collaboration Freire speaks of here then adds to the power of investing in a community over a length of time building on change and transformation. The aim then is not always clear as it can keep changing as people change. Complexity and layers of interpretation are welcomed as “action research both emerges from and contributes to a complex and panoramic view of the world in which one lives and one's own particular place within it.”<sup>268</sup>

Because of the complexity, the ethical framework of PAR is essential to understand. Every aspect of the project must be disseminated to the participants. Researchers must seek consent, reduce barriers so people can participate at every level, take steps to protect confidentiality, and be transparent about how data will be analyzed and distributed.<sup>269</sup> The researchers are there for the well-being of the participants, and while they cannot guarantee the questions will not stir up feelings, the participants need to know they do not need to answer. Therefore, building trust is vital in PAR. Further, at all times, the researcher must be clear about

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<sup>266</sup> McIntyre, *Participatory*, 55.

<sup>267</sup> Freire, “Creating,” 30.

<sup>268</sup> Patricia Gaya Wicks, et al., “Living Inquiry: Personal, Political and Philosophical Groundings for Action Research Practice,” in *SAGE Handbook of Action Research*, ed. Peter Reason and Hilary Bradbury (London: SAGE Publications, 2008), 17.

<sup>269</sup> McIntyre, *Participatory*, 12, 54.



her intentions. If someone does not wish to participate, then we cannot work with her or him.<sup>270</sup>

The interpersonal nature of PAR cannot be underestimated. One needs to develop trust by remembering this work is about change and transformation for the sake of the participants. The researcher must gain the confidence of the community and return to the subjectivity of the project as often as they are able.<sup>271</sup> In Freire's experience this way of conducting research is vital to recognizing people are not objects. They are being empowered by, not segregated from the research in their community.<sup>272</sup>

This empowerment for change is the ultimate goal of PAR – to seek and risk action.<sup>273</sup> The action can take on many forms or just one. Changes present themselves in the form of transforming public policy, making recommendations to administrators or governments, benefits to local communities, and organizing awareness events.<sup>274</sup> Maguire categorizes the types of change resulting from PAR projects as follows:

- Development of critical consciousness of both researcher and participants.
- Improvement of the lives of those involved in the research process.
- Transformation of fundamental societal structures and relationships.<sup>275</sup>

The main focus of any action is that the community must live with the consequences of the project. However, the consequences should not deter action because the aim of PAR action

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<sup>270</sup> Freire, "Creating," 33.

<sup>271</sup> Swantz, "Participatory Action," 42.

<sup>272</sup> Freire, "Creating," 37.

<sup>273</sup> Maguire, *Doing Participatory*, xvii.

<sup>274</sup> McIntyre, *Participatory*, 5.

<sup>275</sup> Maguire, *Doing Participatory*, 30.

should always be improving human flourishing as well as something incredibly practical and not abstract.<sup>276</sup> One can see PAR takes an immense amount of dedication, time, and commitment to partner with a community towards change from the beginning to the end and back to the beginning again. PAR is a dynamic and empowering form of qualitative research spurring on the understanding of experience on deeper levels.

### **Feminist Participatory Research and Ecofeminist Research**

Feminist Participatory Research (FPR) is a needed filter to PAR. In addition to advocating for change and working within a direct context, feminist research, “continues to grapple with who is privileged epistemologically and how this affects the representation of voices and the interpretations of findings.”<sup>277</sup> In other words, are women hidden in research and case studies? The work of Maguire and ecofeminist theologian Ivone Gebara demonstrate women are still on the periphery of research agendas. Concepts, such as objectivity, are mainly defined by males and elite males at that.<sup>278</sup> Further, reports and “facts” on war and poverty leave out information regarding the experience of daily life. Gebara writes,

Daily life is routine, the habitual, everyday activities of family, children, neighbors – everything that makes up the immediate fabric of our existence. Daily life includes our personal stories, the way we feel about events, our reactions as we read the papers or watch television; in short, our response to reality. Into this milieu we are born, suffer, love, and die.... Daily life, and especially that of women, is a place where history is made and where different forms of oppression and of unacknowledged evil show up.<sup>279</sup>

In this way, to explore women’s daily life experiences, is to enter into turning the private into

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<sup>276</sup> Freire, “Creating,” 36; Bradbury and Reason, “Introduction,” 11.

<sup>277</sup> Colleen Reid and Wendy Frisby, “Continuing the Journey: Articulating Dimensions of Feminist Participatory Research (FPR),” in *SAGE Handbook of Action Research*, ed. Peter Reason and Hilary Bradbury (London: SAGE Publications, 2008), 96.

<sup>278</sup> Maguire, *Doing Participatory*, 90.

<sup>279</sup> Gebara, *Out of the Depths*, 77.

public and making it political.<sup>280</sup> Feminism exposes the hiddenness.

Maguire defines feminism as a belief that, globally, women face oppression and exploitation. Feminism commits itself to search out the root causes of the oppression and work to end it. Intersectionality is also paramount in feminist research as scholars realize issues of oppression are not isolated to gender. Race, class, culture, economics, and societal factors all have to be weighed as well.<sup>281</sup> Therefore, proposing the use of stories, experiences, and intuition as ways of knowing and understanding what is happening in certain contexts is a goal of FPR. From there, the aim is the emancipation of women and working towards justice for all.<sup>282</sup>

There is no agreed upon method for feminist research. Rather the point of the discourse and analysis is to move beyond androcentric visions for the world. Epistemology and critical knowledge are important, but beyond that, we must “take notice of things over which knowledge has no control,” Gebara says.<sup>283</sup> Gebara continues to define this view as an inclusive theology where the web of *all* life forms is considered and patriarchal theology is deconstructed in research, scholarship, and activism.<sup>284</sup> The way forward in FPR, then, is to not follow an exact method, but build a framework with the following considerations and aims, to quote Maguire:

- Foundation of critique of the positivist and androcentric underpinnings of dominant paradigm social science research.
- Gender as a central place on its issues agenda.
- Diversity a central place in the theoretical debates – inclusive of/expose all forms of oppression.
- Explicit and equitable attention to gender issues in each phases of participatory research projects.

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<sup>280</sup> Maguire, *Doing Participatory*, 80.

<sup>281</sup> Maguire, *Doing Participatory*, 5.

<sup>282</sup> Maguire, *Doing Participatory* 82.

<sup>283</sup> Gebara, *Out of the Depths*, 68.

<sup>284</sup> Gebara, *Out of the Depths*, 69.

- Explicit attention to how men and women as a group, benefit from the project.
- Pay attention to gender language use.
- Consider other factors (not just gender) such as class, race, and culture.
- Gender as a factor to consider in overall project evaluation.
- Purposefully review and track all projects with gender in mind.<sup>285</sup>

Like Maguire, Gebara emphasizes introducing gender into epistemology, as well as other life forms, to affect our traditional paradigms and invites change. The change to aim for in FPR would be to work towards emancipating utopias of sharing, cooperation, and valuing plurality of discourse from multiple peoples and experiences.<sup>286</sup> This framework, then, is not about idealizing or essentializing women as being better equipped to realize a world that is more equal, sharing, and cooperative. Rather, it invites a wider scope of what kind of knowledge is appreciated and valued.

This knowledge also critiques and adds to PAR as it looks to more than just human experience as well. Val Plumwood argues for shifting human experience from being “above nature.”<sup>287</sup> Instead, the aim is liberation and quality of both humans and nonhumans. In order to accomplish this in research, one must consider the ecological accounts and experiences of humans, animals, plants, and other life forms. The result is a framework of reciprocity which values and looks for “standards of sharing, generosity, and radical equality between species, and with its own stringent obligations to recognize the other as equally positioned, as potentially food and always more than food.”<sup>288</sup> By incorporating this ecofeminist lens of considering a web of life instead of just humans, multiplicity is also another way of valuing religious experience in

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<sup>285</sup> Maguire, *Doing Participatory*, 110-113.

<sup>286</sup> Gebara, *Out of the Depths*, 71.

<sup>287</sup> Plumwood, “Integrating,” 294.

<sup>288</sup> Plumwood, “Integrating,” 318.

research.

As an ecofeminist theologian, Gebara looks to the Trinity as an example of moving beyond traditional boundaries. When she looks to a Trinitarian view of her scholarship and activism, she is able to reflect on the cosmos, the earth, and human experiences in a unifying way.<sup>289</sup> She writes, “The Trinity brings multiplicity and the desire for unity into one single and unique movement, as if they were moments within the same breath...Trinity is a language we build in an attempt to express our awareness of being a multitude and at the same time a unity.”<sup>290</sup> Ultimately to value multiplicity in theological research is to see projects as connected to the life and vision of Jesus who sought justice, respect, and equality during his life.<sup>291</sup> Working with this type of FPR filter in PAR and NI points to, once again, dynamism and valuing the different layers of story in webs of life rather than trying to formulate certain and precise ideas. Feminist and ecofeminist research recognize the unfolding of the earth’s processes as continual creation, deconstruction, and reconstruction towards the aim of transforming systems of oppression.

Of course, taking into account how to represent the experiences of a web of life is not without tension. This still points to a power dynamic of who has the authority to represent the voices of the marginalized and oppressed? Will representations empower or lead to further dominations? As Reid and Frisby advocate, these questions are important to grapple with as they lead to further uncovering of domineering power dynamics and invite creativity with participants

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<sup>289</sup> Ivone Gebara, “The Trinity and Human Experience,” in *Women Healing Earth: Third World Women on Ecology, Feminism, and Religion*, ed. Rosemary Radford Ruether (New York: Orbis Books, 1996), 18.

<sup>290</sup> Gebara, “The Trinity,” 15.

<sup>291</sup> Gebara, *Out of the Depths*, 71.

of how to communicate the research findings and actions.<sup>292</sup>

Facing the tensions directly leads to analyzing the traditional symbolic order that has become habit and working towards change in the research context.<sup>293</sup> Therefore, this points back to the PAR model of investigation, education, and action, while taking into account who and what are shaping each step and outcome. The importance of reflexivity is of the utmost importance in FPR, just as in NI. As Gebara illustrates, if the aim is transformation of a certain context, then responding to the tensions and adapting the research as the project goes on is part of the non-static reality of doing FPR.<sup>294</sup> The goal of scholars and activists using FPR is not to cling to their own objectives and theories, but continue to partner with the oppressed humans and nonhumans to challenge patriarchal and androcentric systems of power and empower social action and change no matter the project.<sup>295</sup>

In conclusion, then, NI, PAR, and FPR/Ecofeminist research methods all speak to partnership, reflexivity, and transformation within groups of marginalized human and nonhuman groups. NI provides a strong foundation of how to understand meaning making in particular stories while also studying the environment around the participant. PAR's strengths lie in shaping a study with the participants, ever reminding the researcher of the intent of transforming a community for the better. Finally, FPR and ecofeminist lenses encourage deconstruction of traditional androcentric approaches to research and encourage the multiplicity of appreciating intersectionality within a research project. All three boldly stress the use of reflexivity and

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<sup>292</sup> Reid and Frisby, "Continuing," 99.

<sup>293</sup> Gebara, *Out of the Depths*, 69.

<sup>294</sup> Gebara, "The Trinity," 15.

<sup>295</sup> Joan Williams and M. Brinton Lykes, "Bridging Theory and Practice: Using Reflexive Cycles in Feminist Participatory Action Research," in *Feminism Psychology* 13, no. 3 (August 1, 2003), 287.

allowing the researcher to hold the outcome, interpretations, and expectations of the research loosely while working for change. Equality and addressing power dynamics as well as working towards a transformational change are at the heart of these qualitative methods. While it might not be known what exactly will happen, one can count on a project of this magnitude changing the researcher as well as the participants, and hopefully communities beyond them as well.

## Chapter 5

### The Journey: The Research Process and My Reflections

I sat on the stairs in my mother's house in shock. I could not stop staring at the two lines in front of me. This was not supposed to happen until after my data was collected, but there was the truth delivered in 2 inches of plastic: I was pregnant. My emotions were all over the place. Could I do this research now? What about traveling? Would "pregnancy brain" limit my abilities to think straight? What are the risks? My privilege was showing before my belly expanded. This was the first time I had to think about these questions. Sure, with my firstborn I had questions of how life would change, but I was not traveling or spending time in fields. My research changed as soon as I saw those two lines of confirmation and my reflexive journaling began in that moment.

Fertility is something women have dealt with since the dawning of human awareness. A woman's worth has been judged by if she could have children and male children at that. Pregnancy is unique to females and though I did not set out to do a study to make connections to childbearing, obviously, now my circumstances would play a role in my dissertation. The connections of farming, childrearing, education, and community make sense to me. After all, the impetus of my entire research interest began when my husband and I turned our house into an urban homestead. Turning our small quarter of an acre of property into a place of production teaches us daily to surrender to the ecosystem around us and partner with it. I learned to see the world as a biotic community. I understand what happens when soil is depleted or an animal dies on our land. We have even killed our own chickens. I know what it means to grow something from a seed and to feed my family from my land.



Consequently, our land and our ecosystem are about more than food. This nonhuman community shows us a rich design where we feel connected to something larger than ourselves. We know this work is spiritual as well as healthy. We can sense the Divine's presence as we use our bodies and talk with our chickens. Creation is alive and though we experience death, disease, and decay in the garden, we also know something deeper is at work. Needing to name that deep-felt experience is one of the reasons I went back to school and how we ended up at a church down the street from our home as well. My husband and I were first known as "The Chicken People." We invited the pastor and others over for a chicken dinner to discuss our plan to have a flock on our property before we even joined the church. The church is Nazarene in doctrine, but is also liturgical. They celebrate Eucharist weekly. Baptism is done either as an infant or as adults. There are lesbian members and many present feel like traditional Evangelicalism had hurt them or left them with baggage. It is unlike any church we ever attended. It is here that our faith and home merge with a community where practicing spirituality means if one has a home, they also have a chicken flock. We were the instigators of this practice. Gardening is not just a pastime as much as a calling, and now there are plans to rip the lawn out at the building to plant a garden and orchard. It is from this location both at home and in church-life that feeds me and my spiritual experiences. The narratives from my home and church carried me to my research locations and became focal points of conversations everywhere I went.

Further, our home, with its rhythms of agricultural production and its influence on our spirituality, is one of the main reasons my husband and I chose to have children. We wondered what it would be like to raise them in an urban environment, but in a way where they understand where their food comes from. We want them to participate in necessary daily chores where lives depend on our caretaking, not dominating. We desire them to see how the Spirit moves, not just

in human lives, but in family-work and caring for animals and plants. Ultimately, we desire to encourage a philosophy of living to work instead of working to live. We want our home and our legacy to be about a redeemed sense of production and not just consumption.

It is my hope in this experience of gaining awareness of the world of agriculture, the spirituality of the work, and growing my own food that, as Bold suggests, “having self-knowledge and belief [will help me] defend my research position to others.”<sup>296</sup> The roles of subjectivity, reflexivity, and cataloguing my own thoughts about childbearing, spiritual experiences, and other matters and the transformation I continue to experience are all part of this process. I explored my own continuities and discontinuities as I interacted with the participants in the study. I understood I may not agree with everyone I met, but that is not the point. As Clandinin writes, “we, too, are under study.”<sup>297</sup> I need to name other peoples’ experiences as well as my own and sometimes that will be complimentary, but other times it will be a chance to dive into my own discomfort. This area of research is too valuable to miss out on due to my own emotions being triggered. Therefore, I did not bracket out those feelings, but fully reflected on them. It was worth the effort to reflexively journal and communicate authentically with these participants as I went along in order to listen to their stories with as much openness as I could for the purpose of building credible relationships.

Journaling on and communicating about vulnerabilities, complexities, and complications throughout the process, allowed for relationships to be built authentically between the participants and myself in an ethical way. This began with explicit contracts in the beginning of

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<sup>296</sup> Bold, *Using Narrative*, 10.

<sup>297</sup> Clandinin, *Engaging*, 82.

the study outlining intentions, purposes, and my own location.<sup>298</sup> However, research always has implicit contracts that are not easy to define in the beginning. As Josselson points out, expectations, assumptions, and contingencies are not always clear until the process is underway. Clearly, something shifted in me as the research began and it would change the course of my expectation and interactions as I traveled to each farm. Therefore, the location and expectations of the study and the relationships built therein were important matters to consider on a constant basis. Expectations, spoken and unspoken, were revisited at each site and even after I collected data. Transparency, with myself and the women in the study, about these types of issues when they came up were rare, but in turn, being vulnerable brought respect, compassion, and empathy as relationships developed.

### **Research Design**

Before relationships developed, though, a research design was created. A key point to remember when I began to design the study is that I am entering *in the midst*, as Clandinin points out.<sup>299</sup> I entered in the midst of my own life, schedule, and commitments as well as seeking to “intrude politely” into other people’s lives in the middle of their work, culture, and context.<sup>300</sup> Also, I entered into this research amidst institutional narratives, cultural narratives, and time unfolding around the participants and myself. Therefore, autobiographical reflexivity, as mentioned was vital when dealing with the temporality, sociality, and place presented in this narrative inquiry. Embodying these three facets meant I understood the investigation of the topic happens at one point in time, but ultimately time is always in flux, hence the temporal nature.

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<sup>298</sup> See Appendix A: Informed Consent page 271

<sup>299</sup> Clandinin, *Engaging*, 42.

<sup>300</sup> Josselson, “The Ethical,” 538.

The study was also conducted amidst social conditions influenced by culture, family, language, institution, and society and within a social relationship being constructed by the researcher and the participant. Lastly, it must be understood that place shapes experience – as mentioned earlier – therefore, place continued to be weighed as the design unfolded.<sup>301</sup> In order to fully embrace these different areas, I kept a research journal which I wrote in during the entire course of my research as well as took voice recordings of myself after long farm days. The journal and recordings provided a space to keep track of my own feelings, thoughts, and emotions along with occurrences that did not take place in recorded interviews.

I found the participants through connections I had in the Women Farm and Agriculture Network (WFAN) and fellow classmates at CST. The farms needed to have some connection to faith, whether that was something explicitly stated in their literature (fliers, website, etc.) about their mission being faith based or the owner of the farm making their faith known to people in a public interview (documentary, newspaper article, blog, etc.) about their work. The farms chosen were as follows: Abundant Table Farm in Camarillo, California, which is connected to Episcopal and Lutheran Churches; Springstoh Family Farm, a dairy farm in Freedom, Wisconsin with connections to an evangelical Christian Missionary Alliance church; The Luther Coffee Farm in Kona, Hawaii - its name coming from a Lutheran background; lastly, Mustard Seed Farm in Ames, Iowa is a Catholic Worker Farm.

It was important to me to find farms in four different states with four different ecosystems, doing four different kinds of farming, and aligned with four different Christian faith denominations. I wanted to see how the connections to these differing denominations were helping or hindering their work and what else could be done – if anything – in these

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<sup>301</sup> Clandinin, *Engaging*, 39-41.

communities. I also wanted to advocate for these women's stories being told on a larger platform. The concentration of male farmers sharing their theology and farming perspectives were still focused on Berry and Jackson and other male voices. This was a chance to bring more narratives to the table.

Participants were contacted by email primarily, then phone if necessary with a brief introduction to my research and an invitation to be part of it with an extended visit by myself in the spring of 2016. The only one who wanted to talk by phone before she agreed was Amber at Springstroh Family Farm. I secured the three other farms before solidifying with Amber. All four farms were curious to say the least. They were excited to be part of the research, but still a little fuzzy about what I was asking of them in my research and visits. There was never any hesitation expressed, though, as all of the first three participants spent time emailing me to find the best time for me to visit. They demonstrated amazing hospitality even in our conversations by arranging interpreters at Abundant Table Farm so I could interview the Spanish speaking female farm manager and offering to pick me up at my hotel in Kona so I did not have to rent a car in Hawaii. For the last of the four farms, initially, I wanted something closer to home in LA. Traveling to the Midwest is expensive and always has multiple stops. But contacts fell through in Oregon and Arizona. When I was introduced to Amber through a friend who works for the EPA in Wisconsin, there was an immediate "clicking" for me. I do not necessarily believe in fate, but after my first conversation on the phone with Amber, I was more excited than ever to be doing this research. I was glad the other contacts fell through. She shared authors she had read like Ellen Davis and Wendell Berry. I noticed she was a deep thinker even over the phone. She was exploring what it meant to be dedicated to this little corner of the world. I frantically scribbled

notes on a sticky pad while she talked becoming more excited to do this research as our conversation ended.

All the participants were emailed the Informed Consent after first contact (See Appendix A). This consent form explained the purposes of the study and intentions, location, and motivations of the researcher. To be transparent and ethical, the explanation also included a brief description listing the benefits as well as a small mention of the potential cautions to consider regarding participating. The benefits come from the foundation of NI, PAR, and FPR research. The language of PAR pointing to human flourishing being the ultimate goal was helpful here as the point was and is to work towards action and health of the parties involved.<sup>302</sup> In summary, the benefits included telling their stories as women in farming, shaping the discussion of sustainable agriculture and spiritual formation, and working towards holistic solutions and action of combining faith and farming, to name a few. Cautions were briefly described in matters of possible discussion of controversial issues and negative feelings that may arise in telling their stories. But they were assured that they did not have to share anything they do not wish, and the assurance of protecting anonymity, if wanted, was emphasized.

The point of not going into detail about the “harms” is noted by Josselson. She argues for erring on the side of brevity on these issues because people do not need to be infantized. Feelings and emotions should be welcomed, not feared, and if I started with trying to comfort people about the issues, suspicion could supersede trust.<sup>303</sup>

As I weighed the importance of the three realities of Narrative Inquiry (temporality, sociality, and place), I recognized my research may morph as I lived alongside people when

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<sup>302</sup> Reason and Bradbury, “Introduction,” 11.

<sup>303</sup> Josselson, “The Ethical,” 543.

conducting research. Moving into the field, I desired to conduct what Bold calls, semi-structured interviews.<sup>304</sup> This meant I asked a few core open-ended questions in order to guide the interview, but as encouraged by Sandra Hollingsworth and Mary Dybdahl, I would “allow for emergent purposes for the conversation to develop.”<sup>305</sup> In other words, the questions should provide scaffolding in order to move into analysis down the road, but allow for follow-up questions and organic rabbit trails to emerge in the interviews. One never knows what meaning may come from allowing the participant to take the questions where they wish. I also utilized questions from McIntyre’s PAR framework which encouraged the participants to frame the issues we examined together.<sup>306</sup> Along the way, I took note of my assumptions, articulated my learning, and talking about controversial topics was not avoided, but done so with civility and openness. Within conducting the interviews, then, developing trust and listening non-judgmentally was vital.<sup>307</sup>

Developing trust happened easily with these women. I showed up to work, not just on my research, but on their farms. I was put to work immediately on two of the farms. I did not stand back and observe. I weeded nettles in California and harvested onions and packed rhubarb in Iowa. In Hawaii and Wisconsin, initial long conversations in a car up the side of a volcanic slope and in an immaculate living room surrounded by cows and corn fields led to new relationships. These dialogues were not part of the formal interviews, but the narratives of the research began

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<sup>304</sup> Bold, *Using Narrative*, 95.

<sup>305</sup> Sandra Hollingsworth and Mary Dybdahl, “Talking to Learn: The Critical Role of Conversation in Narrative Inquiry,” in *Handbook of Narrative Inquiry: Mapping a Methodology*, ed. Jean D. Clandinin (London: SAGE Publications, 2007), 166.

<sup>306</sup> McIntyre, *Participatory*, 50.

<sup>307</sup> Hollingsworth and Dybdahl, “Talking,” 166.

to unfold as I explained by intentions and the farmers began to get to know me better. It was after these conversations that work began. I helped Judy with evening chores on the dairy farm and toured the coffee plants and native trees with Louise. I found with both of them, they came more alive when they were doing their work. Conversations were strong starting places, but meeting them in their vocations, – whether it was love of native trees or cows – I could tell they truly loved what they did.

I was finding my rhythm in the research too. Every farm I grew more tired. My limbs ached and by belly was harder to work around. But there was work to do, and I intended to do it. My emotions were at the surface, but I treated this as a gift rather than a distraction. My pregnancy became a topic of conversation on every farm, but again, it brought up interesting themes of choices to have children or not, or what it is like raising children in this environment. These choices and decisions are what women have faced for millennia, and I was able to sit in kitchens and in fields listening to the choices these women made for their families while feeling my son kick and squirm inside of me. My days were managed by my personal ecosystem, meaning this little being inside determined when I needed to take a break or eat. I still did the work I set out to do, but was also reminded that men never have to face these predicaments of growing a life. It is not that I think men are not caregivers, but birthing is a whole other facet of caring for children.

I was also struck by the land and sky in each place I visited as well as the creatures on each farm. I heard wild turkeys in Hawaii and watched the cows bathe in the mud in Wisconsin. I was privy to the beginning of training a farm dog in Iowa and saw hawks circling in the fields in California. The soils were amazing, different even on the same farm. Almost every farm talked about the evolution of their soil, shaped by volcanic, glacial, and sea activity. Putting my hands



in those soils was reaching into history. There were conflicts with native peoples, and in each location I found myself drawn to understand the indigenous views of the land. I found myself searching out who had lived in this area before colonization. I knew there was not room to include all of this in the research, but it felt like an important piece to personally reflect on at each site. I found myself at a Native American museum in Wisconsin and stopped by a living history museum in Iowa before my flight home. I discovered most of Wisconsin was promised to various Indian tribes such as the Oneida people, but their land has greatly dwindled over time. I was shocked to learn Iowa has no formally recognized tribal land left as their first nation people were sent to other states. I talked about Hawaiian culture at great lengths with Louise, too, learning the Hawaiian leaders did a lot to develop agriculture years and years ago. These issues are complex, and even though I scratched the surface of these issues, it felt important to honor these legacies and stories of past eras.

Mostly, what I walked away from the research with was so much more gray than black and white. I live in a culture that wants to figure out if genetically modified is “bad” and if it really is the best option to be vegan in today’s climate? The answers were always so much more complex at each visit. I kept learning how the farmers were dispelling the assumptions and naiveties in their communities – teaching how a dairy farm is clean or how seeds are planted and kept from the birds. These stories took time to learn and that was one of the lessons I learned the most: how much time is needed to break down issues, stereotypes, and labels. We desire those things to make our lives easier to understand – from understanding our neighbor to shopping at the grocery store – but there is always more behind the labels. My questions set out to peel back those labels and layers.

When it came time to conduct the interviews it was my intention to not ask leading questions or influence answers, but still dig deep into the questions. To do this, I asked broad questions about the participants' journey of starting their farms and explored details, metaphors, and feelings that emerged. Appendix B details these questions. For instance, when I was closing my interview with Judy I wanted her to expand on why she chose to keep their dairy smaller in size. Taking cues from our conversations, I asked the following question that was not on my initial list: "I did have one more question I guess, so you talked about you don't know what John would have done if he would've been alive and you see these big dairies, what was the intention behind staying small?"<sup>308</sup> Follow up questions like this one were vital to explore. In this case, my attention was drawn to the giant dairy farms around Judy's farm and my curiosity of why their operation had remained fairly small was important to cover.

By immersing myself in each context for a matter of four days-time, I could experience and journal about the pauses, body language, metaphors, and work habits of the participants. I continued to participate in chores – cooking, weeding, planting, shoveling, etc. –as this was truly about living alongside these participants. These were the types of things I could not witness to a full, holistic extent over email, chatrooms, or video chatting. When I prepared meals with people or was taken out to eat after a church service, I witnessed life unfolding in more than a screen could show me. I picked Kale with Louise to make a pesto for dinner. When Judy, Amber, and I went out for breakfast, they insisted it was their treat. But when we were there, they ran into so many people and one gentleman ended up paying for our meal out of his own appreciation for Judy. Even noticing the way language was used in a place points to cultural and interpersonal

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<sup>308</sup> Personal recording by author, March 20, 2016.

matters, as Squire argues.<sup>309</sup> Being included at a staff meeting at Abundant Table Farm and hearing their affinity for a coworker who was leaving showed an affection and an employee culture built on respect and love. Visiting the farms in person was invaluable to this research in order to experience examples like these.<sup>310</sup>

The use of pictures and video from my time at the farms and from participants' stories was important to collect as well. Bold is one of the scholars addressing the use of new types of media in research, and she points out it is important to remember photos are a recreation, not a reality. On different days I saw different things, from different angles, making for layered research. Instead of avoiding these layers, they can provide a deeper understanding of what took place temporarily in the locations I studied.<sup>311</sup> Participants shared photos with me long after I left as well. I was sent pictures of wildflowers by Amber because when I was there, they were not in bloom. Louise sent me pictures of a garden we planted together that was thriving a couple of months after I departed. These correspondences were important because it showed a relationship developed and trust was gained. It is also important to remember though, I must be careful to use the mediums for what they are good for and disregard reading too much into videos and pictures. For instance, in the case of the farms, video and picture data is a strong use of seeing landscapes and labor techniques. They are useful to catalogue different types of plants or animals present on the farms. But if I tried to capture the whole of a story in a video interview, that would be

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<sup>309</sup> Squire, "From Experience," 62.

<sup>310</sup> Because of the nature of these relationships and sharing so many meals, I included a recipe from each farm in Appendix C as it was an important element to relationship building in my research. Each farm was incredibly generous in sharing their bounty. I ate from the land and animals in each location. The cheese, eggs, herbs, squash, and greens were shared with such hospitality and sharing recipes is a good example of this practice. It showcases a small element of our time together and extends the practice of sharing food beyond our experience.

<sup>311</sup> Bold, *Using Narrative*, 113.

misleading. Also, when respecting confidentiality, having videos and pictures of people would be conflicting ethically. In my study, however, all participants agreed not to be anonymous with their names or the name and location of the farms. Being explicit about my use of these resources and how I will use them throughout the study helped maintain trust and respect.

Once the data from interviews and field visits was collected, I began the transcription process. This act of writing out the interviews line by line is of course not equal to talking. Even in the transcribing, some farm terminology was lost on me and it was important to seek clarification. I followed-up with each interviewee giving them four weeks to make edits to the transcripts before I went ahead with what data I collected. This was the first step in member-checking, the process of partnering and sharing the data with the participants at different stages of the research. Letting them be the experts of their own lives and clarifying and approving the data helps alleviate power dynamics which could shadow the research if I kept the data and interpretation to myself.<sup>312</sup> Clandinin, Josselson, McIntyre, Maguire, and Freire all advocate for keeping in touch and being transparent with my participants as the study unfolded.

Louise, Amber, and Jeannette all responded with minor edits; I did not receive edits from the others. They corrected some terms and made sure to clarify a few points regarding names or giving me more context of a person or story. Overall, no large changes were made, and no one contested the interview information. The interviews were representations of what occurred in the field, and I moved on to coding and storying the data.

I began the next phase by analyzing the interviews line-by-line, but also started coding the data as well. In addition to looking for the characters, plot, scenes and contextual elements,

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<sup>312</sup> Josselson, "The Ethical," 546.

line-by-line and focused coding allowed for themes to emerge stemming from concerns and statements between the stories. Bold argues grounded theory thematic coding is useful for narrative researchers with clear foci and questions.<sup>313</sup> Included in the codings are metaphors and feelings, which need to be transcribed and included. As advocated by Hyden earlier, including body movements, pauses, and actions in the transcripts, was important to the embodiment of these stories.

Using the software MAXQDA, I was able to code in vivo. This means I could take sections of the interviews and give each one different codes based on direct inference from the participants' transcripts. For instance, when God was discussed this went under the code "spirituality/God." Spiritual experiences under the code "spirituality" included sensing God on the farm as well as practices of gratitude, lament, and prayer. Some farmers brought up scripture as this was also important to them when it came to connecting their spiritual life and practice to their farm lives. When animals were mentioned they were placed under the code "ecosystem/animals." If the death of person, plant, or animals was brought up, it went under a code of "life/death." Other codes included issues and conflicts each farm faced, advocacy they saw in their communities or wanted, and the community of relationships around them. Further, each practice and work in their bodies was coded, too. There were multiple codes in some places making for layered analysis and important interconnections in the data. The software was able to then pull all of the codes into excel sheets to see the information from each coded section. I could pull the data from one farm or all of the farms together.<sup>314</sup>

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<sup>313</sup> Bold, *Using Narrative*, 131.

<sup>314</sup> See Appendix D for spreadsheets and codes from in vivo coding.

I also was able to code emotions, actions, and meaning making with gerunds, while also seeing gaps. The codes came from the actual data, and I could build from the data instead of my own hypotheses. The categories birthed from the data then provided insights into the processes the participants who run these farms are facing in their lives, assuring their stories are the ones told. Undergoing this process, I then made a plot of my time on each farm. As Leonard Webster and Patricie Mertova explain, narrative structure in stories reveals a plot. “Plot can be identified as a connection among elements, which is neither one of logical consequence nor one of mere succession. The connection seems rather designed to move our understanding of situation forward by developing or unfolding it... What can be demanded of a narrative is to display in what way occurrences represent actions.”<sup>315</sup> In other words, what characters, scenes, and places come through in the transcripts? Continuing to see the contexts, actions, and points of view is invaluable in this process as is coupling them with the major themes and codes of each farm.

I also borrowed from a social constructivist lens as well as grounded theory open coding techniques, while still embracing the overall narrative inquiry method. To do this, I first recognized that all of the stories were representative and subjective. As the narrator, I looked for a plot – or metastory – from disordered experiences.<sup>316</sup> This is why transcription and analysis are interwoven in this design. As Riessman states, “Close and repeated listenings, coupled with methodic transcribing, often lead to insights that in turn shape how we choose to represent an interview narrative in our text.”<sup>317</sup> Letting the broad research questions begin the process is

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<sup>315</sup> Leonard Webster and Patricie Mertova, *Using Narrative Inquiry as a Research Method: An Introduction to Using Critical Event Narrative Analysis in Research on Learning and Teaching* (London: Routledge, 2007), 19.

<sup>316</sup> Riessman, *Narrative*, 2-4.

<sup>317</sup> Riessman, *Narrative*, 60.

important as too specific of a question could lead to looking for answers to fit questions instead of letting themes emerge from the stories collected. Then, looking for how the participants arrange the story and how the context and environment shape the narrative is important when continuing to review the transcripts.

Annie G. Rogers explains this as a social constructivist approach in that as the researcher, I deny a self shaped in a vacuum:

These researchers view the [participant] as self-reflective within a social context. In an interview analysis, then, it is possible to interpret relations between external (social) contingencies and internal (individual and self-reflective experience). Often this includes an examination not only of the participant's social experience but also of multiple truths and shifting identity positions.<sup>318</sup>

By beginning to plot characters and scenes, alongside the external-social and internal-reflective data, a metastory emerges in chapter ten displaying how meaning making is occurring in the participants' stories. In this way, I believe the pictures and videos also assisted me in describing an animal they have a relationship with or a landscape of the field they work. These were important to include in the data to shape the ecosystem lens I am looking to include. Noting that characters in the plots are not just humans, but are the organisms, plants, and animals from the visits and mentioned in the interviews were key to include, too, because they shaped the story and data.

When I am speaking about these women's experiences and discovering meanings in their stories eventually, it is vital to be collaborative and interpretive together. This means I stressed each stage as *my interpretation* of events and allowed the participants to correct parts of their story if needed. Had there been a tension in terms of two different accounts, I would have written

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<sup>318</sup> Annie G. Rogers, "The Unsayable, Lacanian Psychoanalysis, and the Art of Narrative Interviewing," in *Handbook of Narrative Inquiry: Mapping a Methodology*, ed. Jean D. Clandinin (London: SAGE Publications, 2007), 102.

both accounts and possibly even the disagreement of views in a respectful manner. Doing so would provide more layers and more chances for further interpretation and complexity which should not be feared, but welcomed in the narrative process.

Once the stories were written, each farmer was each sent a personal email and given five weeks to edit, approve, comment, or dialogue with me. The changes asked for in this process of member-checking were few. Louise had no changes other than a few corrections to plant names. She wrote me after her first read through: “I read your paper today. I feel very honored by your treatment of my story...I honestly felt embarrassed by the tape transcript and I am amazed and grateful for your looking behind and around all my rambling to get to the heart and spirit.”<sup>319</sup> In a final email to me she thanked me again for telling her story. Alice asked for some of the historical details to be corrected. She had not given me the names of the people who started the farm or the exact timeline, so putting that in the story was understandable to honor the narrative of the farm. She also asked for the syntax of her quotes to be smoothed out. Originally, I left in the direct quotes with most of the “ums” and “likes,” but it did take away from the heart of what Alice was saying. The quotes did not change the meaning of what she said and, in turn, by smoothing them out, she felt better represented.

Amber, too, had issues with her direct quotes. When she sent me her edited story, she told me, “It's very strange to read about yourself...I think I will avoid it in the future ☺”<sup>320</sup> But she engaged the process nonetheless. In her edits, almost every direct quote was altered. Most of the changes made were insignificant. Like Alice's, it was a matter of smoothing out syntax issues.

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<sup>319</sup> Alice McGary, e-mail message to author, July 24, 2017.

<sup>320</sup> Amber Springstroh, email message to author, July 26, 2017.



But, of the quotes she altered, there were two I felt lost the meaning in the changes she wanted to make. I wrote the following email to her:

There are two quotes I would love to keep closer to their original form (albeit cleaned up a bit) on pages 4 and 6. You will see my comments on the side. My only reason for these two in particular is they both convey a great amount of love you and your mom have for each other in my view. But again, that is my take and if you would like me to change them back to how you edited them, I am more than happy to do so as this is the story of your farm being represented.<sup>321</sup>

One of the examples was one when her mother said of her, “She thought this was where God called her to be and she has just been a faithful, faithful girl.” Amber, representing her and her mother, edited to read, “she has been a faithful girl.” But in that change of losing the “just” and the two “faithful”s, to me, it lost a meaning her mom was trying to convey of how loyal Amber has been in the last 15 years. After my email, Amber wrote back that my comments “were good,” approving my understanding of the situation.

I was glad this back and forth happened with Amber on this issue and a couple more because it felt like we were partnering with honoring all parties involved at the Springstroh Farm. It was understood in the responses I received that this was my take on a temporal season, but the responses were also peppered with gratitude, weather reports on the farms, and comments about how fun it was to see their stories. It should be noted Abundant Table did not respond after reaching out to them. I remain confident in their narrative, though, as I do in the others. I remain humbled and honored to be able to share their stories in the narratives that follow.

If this research had been more ethnographic or solely PAR, I can imagine writing stories *with* these women. The study being Narrative Inquiry then provides a bit of distance, not in terms of forming relationships and trust, but of the responsibility of writing the stories and

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<sup>321</sup> Author email response to Amber Springstroh, August 5, 2017.

disseminating them. Because this is a dissertation conducted and written by me, I am not under the illusion that this work is completely partner-able, as Josselson points out.<sup>322</sup> This is where Narrative Inquiry breaks from Participant Action Research. As mentioned, I am not investing in one community for a lengthy amount of time. That is not within the scope of this project. But it is still valuable to provide opportunities to member-check at different points in the research journey, not just the beginning.

After the stories were approved, analysis and comparisons could be made from pulling the codes and major themes each farm had in common. The themes, codes, transcripts and stories were then analyzed and worked into a larger metastory explaining what the themes mean for the fields of agriculture and spiritual formation. This involved more in depth reading of the transcripts and revisiting events and stories again and again to see if “a telling code that [I] construct to fit one incident or statement might illuminate another.”<sup>323</sup> Clandinin calls these threads or patterns. It is my intention not to use the codes, themes, and threads to construct a theory, but rather to paint a picture of what is happening currently with these four women running farms driven by some aspect of their theology and spiritual formation. Their voices may shed light on broader trends, but that is not the goal. Instead, the aim of feminist research is to bring their stories to light in a field where men have characteristically been the knowledge-keepers. Providing these individuals’ experiences will enhance the fields of academia, agriculture, and theology as this will be a new way to merge theory and practice. Furthermore, the point is not to essentialize women as being closer to nature, as is a criticism of ecofeminism. Rather, the aim is to see what action steps these farmers wish to see happen in the area of faith-

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<sup>322</sup> Josselson, “The Ethical,” 549.

<sup>323</sup> Kathy Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory: A Practical Guide Through Qualitative Analysis* (London: SAGE Publications, 2006), 59.

based farming in order to empower others, help ecosystems, and hopefully partner more efficiently with different church denominations using a new model of agricultural spirituality.

It is my hope the research is honoring. Of course, I did not shirk from naming tensions, but continued to ask myself what is my responsibility with this data – with these stories? In this way, the truth of this research is not grounded in objectivity or fact-finding missions. The truth lies in the experience, the telling of the stories, and the work of the bodies and organisms represented in the data. Exaggerations may happen on the part of the participants. Forgetfulness was also weighed, but not in the sense that a story is less valuable. Rather truth is revealed in the process of *how* someone shared their journey or demonstrated their work. As emphasized by Webster and Mertova, Narrative Inquiry “is more concerned with individual truths than identifying generalisable and repeatable events.”<sup>324</sup> The trustworthiness, then, in this type of research comes from robust data collection and meaningful analysis of what happened during the site visits to the farms. Ultimately, the motivation of this research is to walk alongside these women in a unique way to showcase their stories of being farmers in a world that has often not given attention to specific narratives of women in agriculture. I am still unpacking the lessons I learned on each farm visit.

As the themes came to the forefront, there were a few I returned to again and again. The idea of life and death emerged often as each participant dealt with these realities on a daily basis. The stories of the deaths of loved ones, people, animals, and even plants, were palpable. Their lives went on in meaningful ways despite facing these tensions. A few of the stories included a cow named Popcorn that had an ugly udder and was sent to slaughter, but was loved by a granddaughter, and a native tree population that was eaten by wild pigs. Killing bunnies in the

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<sup>324</sup> Webster and Mertova, *Using Narrative Inquiry*, 89.

fields that eat the vegetables was normal, but not a favorite chore by any means. These stories stood out to me, but were standard to the farmers. The privilege of my day-to-day does not include facing life and death each day. Another theme was the daily spiritual practice each farmer undertook: Waking at 4am to milk cows, a daily Ignatian examen, a prayer bench overlooking the ocean, important bodily practices of tai chi, or walking the grounds of each farm. There was so much to unpack in these themes. Through sorting the themes, a story started to come through in terms of facing these tensions and undertaking these practices and choosing a life of resurrection. More of this is explained in chapter ten as a model of agricultural spirituality began to emerge to help define the metastory and themes.

Mostly, this particular process of Narrative Inquiry built my appreciation of this country, of the soil around us, and these women. They all face immense challenges and rise to meet them. I also faced challenges in the midst of the research. As my pregnancy continued we were met with news our child might be born with Down Syndrome. For a couple of months, we did not know what this meant or what kind of trisomy (which is what Down Syndrome is) might be presented to us. Some of these trisomies mean a baby lives for only a few minutes after birth. I held my belly and wondered if all of this technology and testing was worth the worry? In the end, a blood test confirmed our baby did not have Down Syndrome and we discontinued the rest of the tests. In preparation for his birth and a slower season, we culled our chicken flock and planted less in our garden. Life was changing again.

Shortly after our son's beautiful birth, he was admitted to the hospital with respiratory issues. I had not even healed from my C-section as I faced two weeks in two different hospitals, sleeping in a chair and meeting with doctor after doctor. In a way, my research buoyed me. I took a break from analyzing and storying the data, but in my heart I knew this whole birth

process was a process of life, death, and resurrection too. This was a journey the farmers faced every season, if not daily. I thought of the Immokalee babies and their mothers in the Florida tomato fields. I thought of the quote in the barn in Wisconsin: “Remember that this is the Home of Mothers. Treat each cow as a Mother should be treated. The giving of milk is a function of Motherhood; rough treatment lessens the flow. What injures me as well as the cow. Always keep these ideas in mind in dealing with my cattle. Signed, God.”<sup>325</sup> I thought of Reyna raising her daughters, and Alice’s strain this past year of wondering if she made the right decision in not having children yet...

This dissertation did not set out to be about motherhood or birth and death, but that is where the research took me. I wanted to learn the stories of these women and dive into mine, and in doing the work of PAR and Narrative Inquiry, I gained more than learning stories. I made friends and became a partner in this work of agricultural spirituality. The codes and themes tell only one part of the many layers that happened these past couple of years, but the stories and trusting relationships will continue to impact me for years to come.

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<sup>325</sup> Author’s journal entry, March 20, 2016.

## Chapter 6

### Abundant Table, Camarillo, California

If one drives north up the coast of California from Los Angeles to Santa Barbara, at the halfway point, the traveler will descend an enormous hill depositing them in an area known as the Oxnard Plain. This land was shaped by the receding of the ocean over epochs to its now current placement. As the waters retreated, the sediment they left behind makes the plain rich, fertile, and full of amazing minerals and nutrients that assist in growing berries and vegetables there now. Jeannette Ban, one of the farmers at Abundant Table Farm (AT) who also serves as a program coordinator, is quick to mention this history in light of the loam and silt soil that remains today. It is easy to drive through Oxnard and Camarillo as people speed toward California's Riviera. One might notice some fields on the side of the freeway or stop at a fruit stand. However, they would be remiss to learn they are in one of the US' most fertile areas in the matter of fruit, and a problematic area when it comes to farm labor and land prices.

These issues are nothing new to AT. The team running the farm has worked in various locations in Ventura County over the past decade. Born out of a desire to connect with local college students in a non-traditional setting, the campus ministry of the Episcopal Church in the area decided to start a farm. Sarah Nolan, then a chaplain of the ministry and now Director of Programs and Community Partnerships at the farm, does not remember the exact conversation, but she had an influential experience at a previous farm and wondered what it would look like to start an internship program for college students on a farm. A local family offered their farmhouse and land for the project as they were shifting their soil and produce to organics. The idea was the students and staff would experiment with "living together in intentional community [and],

instead of working in a social service agency, working together in the farm, engaging issues of food justice and then, engaging kind of theological exploration, leadership development and spirituality,” Sarah explains.<sup>326</sup>

From 2009 on, a diverse group has joined them on their farm to launch their Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) and farm to school programs. Their partners range from interns to community partners to the Episcopal and Lutheran churches. In addition to Sarah, they have an executive director, director of farm education, farm fellow, and farm manager who are all women. There is only one male on staff seasonally. They do not describe the farm as being intentionally female, but instead, the most qualified and those who reach out for jobs have been overwhelmingly women.

AT is a 501c3 non-profit, but describes itself as a “kind of monastic community.”<sup>327</sup> It is not hard to see why after spending time on their farm and at the farm church. The themes that come through most clearly from the interviews are community and partnership, relationships, advocacy, and spirituality. I am invited without hesitation into every facet of their farm: weeding, sharing meals, community meetings, and worship. But the list does not stop there. They are inclusive in terms of sharing inside jokes and welcoming me to be part of a farewell celebration of a farm team member. I also hear details of financials discussed with the landlord and Sarah. Obviously, my access is only brief, but in that time, hospitality, openness, and stewardship grounded in relationship stand out to me.

This groundedness is described in all three of the interviews I conduct while on the farm. They speak of the importance of roots and finding a foundation despite having to move their

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<sup>326</sup> Sarah Nolan, interview by author, Camarillo, CA, March 3, 2016.

<sup>327</sup> Nolan, interview.

farm from plot to plot numerous times since its inception. Since they do not own land, they have had to move four times in the lifespan of their farm. This is due to the practice of leasing land to younger farms where property prices are too high to buy. Once a lease is up (if it cannot be renegotiated), new land must be found or the farm will go out of business. While the relationship with the ground in a certain location might be sacrificed at AT, the relationships gained and built in each move create a unique community. They do not root into land long term, but in each other. Jeannette explains, “And on a deeper level too, because we have been on different pieces of land, so it’s not like we are tied to land. We’re tied to a community and that community roots into a piece of land, whatever piece of land that is. And it’s not ideal, it’s interesting to see how we’re able to... be a farm community that doesn’t really have a farm.”<sup>328</sup>

The farm community is very inclusive and open, but it is also hard to find because of the moving of locations and renting land from other landowners. Indeed, their farm is hard to find without knowing someone. There is no sign on the road or directing me to them when I drive up the coast in March. I am given a phone number and told people will be in the field to flag me down. I visit them in year one of a two-year lease on a five-acre plot of organically cared-for land. There is no formal building either. Instead their packing station for their produce is housed in two large former shipping containers with portable toilets next to them.

It looks like many-a-field along the 101 or 126 freeway in southern California I am used to driving by at 70mph. But upon closer investigation, something radical and transformational is happening in this space. This begins to emerge as soon as I call and connect with Jeannette outside the fence. She seems at ease in the fields in her wide-brim hat and flannel shirt. I have come on harvest day which means I witness a bustle of activity for the four people working in

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<sup>328</sup> Jeanette Ban, interview by author, Camarillo, CA, March 2, 2016.



and around their field. Everyone is friendly, but focused on their tasks too. That does not stop Reyna, the farm manager, from greeting me with an orange before she continues to wash produce. Today they are picking carrots and chard for their CSA members' boxes. The produce is then driven in one to two cars to different pick-up locations after being cleaned and boxed.

Jeanette asks if I want a job since she has some matters to take care of before our interview. I eagerly say, "Yes! For sure." Having walked by the bright green, decadent lettuces and the purple leafed beats, I am hoping I can jump in and harvest as well.

"What we need is help weeding the nettles over by the row of radishes," Jeannette tells me. I roll with it because this is what being on a farm means – doing what needs to get done. "Tom is over there," Jeannette continues. "He is another volunteer. You can join him." She gives me a pair of latex surgical gloves and a long, serrated knife that could easily chop my hand off.<sup>329</sup>

In between some small talk with volunteer Tom, I get to know the nettle plant well. I feel its spikey points through the gloves and occasionally through my pants. It may not be a friendly plant, but it is a plant with a healthy reputation. Whether helping to treat arthritis or allergies, its folk remedies are well known. However, it is also a highly invasive weed especially in an organic field where picking by hand instead of spraying chemicals is the *modus operandi*. This work is not romantic as I sit in the field with my knife trying not to cut myself or get poked.

Jeannette comes to get me after an hour or so and we set up two lawn chairs inside one of the shipping containers. It is there I learned how this farm transformed her from being angry about the microaggressions she experienced from other farmers in the field as well as overcoming difficulties with being a newcomer to agriculture. She explained, "I'm just trying to like figure out who I want to be and how to utilize this market that is very geared towards a

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<sup>329</sup> All quotes from personal recording by author, March 2, 2016.

different demographic to grow food and ya know change the system somehow to make it easier and more sustainable, like economically sustainable.”<sup>330</sup> She does this through being the main one to plan crop rotations, soil fertility plans, and seed ordering. But it is in her work in the fields where she has found peace in slowing down while she weeds, harvests, and moves drip tape in the rows.

The rows currently hold the end of the cool season crops: Chard, beets, fennel, lettuce, fava beans, carrots, kale, cilantro, and parsley. They also recognize part of working with their CSA members is providing vegetables and fruits from their native cuisines. AT works with other farms to provide oranges, corn, potatoes, avocados, and adapted to growing other varieties of herbs like epazote, lamb’s quarters, and purslane which are used heavily in Mexican cooking. They are not just growing what they want too, but partnering in hospitality to work with their neighbors.

Jeannette tells me she discovered there was more to her faith than her conservative upbringing introduced her to while doing this work. She learned to see God all around her and that sin as a focus was not the only thing to be concerned about as a person of faith. The practices of weeding in particular stands out to her:

I do farming because it’s fulfilling work, it’s meaningful work. It’s really nice to have a steady flow of nutrient dense vegetables in the kitchen. It’s also really a spiritual practice for me, especially weeding. Weeding is my favorite thing about farming. I know, it took a long time to get there, but it’s a daily practice and it’s really meaningful to run your hands over an entire, touch every single plant in a row as you’re removing the weeds. It helps with the weeding in your brain too.<sup>331</sup>

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<sup>330</sup> Ban, interview.

<sup>331</sup> Ban, interview.

I nod as she talks, sensing her connectedness with our surroundings. The connectedness comes in knowing the land well enough to know what it needs – weeding, planting, tilling, harvesting.

Each task requires an awareness and understanding from dedicating one's self to this work.

Understanding this work also means recognizing the tension in relationship and spirituality when it comes to working on the farm. Jeannette recalls a memory of first arriving on the farm as a vegetarian:

My favorite thing about working on the farm was I was a vegetarian when I first started working here and by working on the farm I realized that that is a way more complicated question than just not eating meat. Because one of my first weeks working on the farm, the task was to go and kill all of the cucumber beetles that were on the cucumbers. So you had to walk around and pop cucumber beetles and I was thinking, "I thought we were growing vegetables here and I thought we didn't have to kill anybody or anything?" The more you kind of unravel what it means to grow food...where we as humans sit in that spool of thread, the more you realize, I realize I couldn't be a vegetarian, you could, but not for the reasons I was doing it. Because growing food means killing lots of bugs, lots of worms, lots of little bunnies that live in the forest, lots of birds, lots of squirrels. Ya know, thinning is killing a whole bunch of baby plants, so that has been my favorite aha moment of "Oh my gosh!" It's so much more complicated than if you want to advocate for animals. You can't just pat yourself on the back, it's not simple to pat yourself on the back for not eating meat. It's more about you have to unpack what is going on in the meat culture and buy meat that is sustainably raised if that is your angle into it.<sup>332</sup>

This tension of facing life and death is a common theme with each farmer. But what Jeannette articulates so well is that once one is in partnership and relationship with the land, it is layered and complex. It takes time to build this awareness and understand the cycle of life and death is what makes eating possible.

It also sounds nice to have an idyllic organic farm, but even that is a myth as Jeannette breaks down her routine on the five acres they care for, as she explains, "everything is really intensive. There's not a lot of time to let the soil rest in a cover crop or rejuvenate the soil in that way. Our neighbors don't do anything like that because it's so go go go. Apply fertilizer, put the

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<sup>332</sup> Ban, interview.

rows in, and then grow, harvest, till it, and the whole process starts again. So I think our challenge is being an intensive production on such small portion of land whilst trying to care for the soil and try to stay away from using synthetic fertilizers and things like that.”<sup>333</sup> This translates into applying compost and then growing something that take a lot of nutrients, like tomatoes or watermelon. Directly following those crops comes something easier to sow like spinach and lettuces. Finally, a legume is planted in order replace a bit of nitrogen back in the soil. The goal after this intensive partnership process in their ecosystem is to let the soil rest, most likely in a cover crop. During my visit, they have two acres in a cover crop (such as oats or hairy vetch or field peas) to do just that. But since they need income and need to supply crops on a continual basis, Jeannette laughs that it rarely happens in this perfect, sequential order. Perhaps it is due to living in this tension that creates such a hospitable environment for visitors like myself. In other words, they do not romanticize farming or life in general. They live with contradiction and make peace with the land and each other each day. It is natural that their spiritual practice is imbued with the same realizations.

Even after the recorder is off, our conversation continues over lunch as Jeannette wants to hear more about my research, and I want to learn as much as I can about the farm. We join Reyna Ortega, the farm manager, and Guadalupe who are already eating. I am immediately offered some of Reyna’s homemade shredded chicken dish on a tostada even though I brought my lunch. While devouring this homemade meal and peeling oranges, laughs are shared on the edge of the field as we sit in the shade of the delivery vehicles. The conversation soon turns to me being three months pregnant. Despite me not knowing very much Spanish and Reyna only knowing a little English, a connection emerges around carrying children. She talks about her

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<sup>333</sup> Ban, interview.

experience with pregnancy and feeling sick at weird times of the day, and I mention I am just feeling better after weeks of feeling nauseous.

The conversation takes a serious turn when we talk about women working in the fields pregnant. One of Reyna's daughters has down syndrome. She conveys a powerful, knowledgeable sense of judgment of a system that thinks it is okay to have pregnant women laboring in fields. She is convicted that her daughter's health struggles are because of her farm work. She also recalls the story of the Immokalee babies. In 2004, three babies were born months apart to couples who had been working in tomato fields in Florida during their pregnancies. All three had complications, from missing limbs and an ear to even one of the babies passing away three days after birth. Litigation and settlements took years. The heartache of those parents can never be assuaged. We continue to talk about the injustice of this system, of other abuses to women including men visiting their farm only to tell them they are doing their jobs wrong. Sarah also mentions her role as a young woman farmer in community meetings where sometimes she is met with enthusiasm and cheerleading, but is often left with more responsibility. She describes the situation:

I will leave the meeting feeling really well-respected that people are [saying], "You're doing so much Sarah, that's so amazing what you're doing." And that makes me feel good. And then as I'm thinking about it, I'm like, "Wait, I'm the one that's working." Most of the men are gonna go home and not think twice about what's going on. And I'm actually the one developing the proposal or I'm sharing more of the weight of whatever it is that our group is doing because I depend on its success more than anyone else does because everyone else has a job, has family money, are older men, so they're established. My work is around my survival or around the survival of my community. In some way, and I do put some of that to being a female, to being a young adult in this era. Not all of it, some of it is just where you were born and happened to land. But that is definitely – it's neat to connect with other women, but then having this ah-ha moment and that everyone's kind of celebrating it but then having this ah ha moment like, we're always working harder because our survival is different.<sup>334</sup>

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<sup>334</sup> Nolan, interview.

And survive they have. Despite the odds of rising land prices, drought, and not owning land, this group of women continues to practice their faith on the land.

These stories stay with me as I head back into the field after lunch and in subsequent days. I sit in the field with my knife and my sturdier gardening gloves from home the next day pulling out nettle. I befriend ladybugs and try not to step on the newly budding radishes. However, I am also deeply struck by the fact that women who are pregnant do this work daily. My privilege is obvious as I have no quota to meet. I can take a break or quit whenever I want, and the porta-potties are clean. I know this is just a stop in my life, not a destination. Tears roll down my face on the drive home as I record my notes. I land in the recognition that we are all “taking care of our children the best way we know how.”<sup>335</sup> Pregnancy already requires so much sacrifice of one’s body and mind. I can feel my belly expanding as my first trimester ends. I look down from the ladybugs to my womb, praying to make a difference with these stories and this work. The weeding is forcing me to stop and think through these women’s narratives, their smiles and laughter, as well as what they have survived. Despite such different backgrounds, they are rooted to each other out here on the Oxnard Plain and now a tiny part of me is, too, as I have been welcomed unequivocally.

This welcoming continues as I sit down to community meetings with Sarah and a morning staff meeting with the farm team. They are partnered to each other on this farm, but also to the community. One woman at the school district has championed the farm to school program even to the point of the school still partnering with AT when the farm moved to a different piece of land and could not provide carrots for six months. The community rallies around the farm and

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<sup>335</sup> Personal recording by author, March 2, 2016.

is an integral part of its survival. This much is obvious as I attend the staff meeting the next morning as well. Different members bring dishes to sample for the newsletter recipes and fresh squeezed orange juice is passed around. I am offered food as well as to participate in what takes up much of the meeting: staff members each saying their high and low for the week. Everyone is engaged and invested in each other's stories and how they can help one another. The projects and advocacy work for the farm come later, but when they address these matters, the energy in the room is attuned to the needs of each person. There is no panic over the workings of the farm, just deep understanding and mutual respect for the farm crew, the schools, and the community they partner with daily. Guadalupe, one of the two males in the room, brings up the abuses in neighboring fields which are awful. Obviously, there is no lack of recognition of what is happening with their neighbors, but the groundedness and connectedness to each other and their community roots them with a healthy focus and a desire to help. Their practices in the field and attentiveness to each other give them lenses to see beyond their land.

Shortly after the staff meeting, the newest employee, Sanra, sits down with me and Reyna to assist in translating the interview. Reyna and I already connected in the field for a couple days, so there is some trust there I can feel as we joke about nettles and funny stories we touched on at lunch. The powerful connections the farm team has with each other and to this land come through in Reyna's words. She calls her coming to this farm a "God-incidence" instead of a coincidence.<sup>336</sup> Her husband and fellow farmer, Guadalupe, suggested she work there after he was finishing up a two-month temporary job at AT. Upon starting she did not know what to make of this new situation having worked in more mechanical situations of packing fruits and vegetables, not so much weeding and working the land.

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<sup>336</sup> Reyna Ortega, interview by author, Camarillo, CA, March 4, 2016.

She explains, “I started working and hearing a lot about faith and earth and faith and land. What were these hippies talking about, were they smoking weed?” To this comment, we all collapse into laughter. She continues, “I really felt like a transition between being just someone who worked in the fields to someone who was really involved in the work.”<sup>337</sup> She talks about embracing her transformation when she would keep trying her own methods even after men would come to farm and tell her she was doing her job wrong. Her persistence pays off, not in industrial techniques, but in building relationships with the people and plants around her.

Her words speak powerfully to this dynamic:

At first I was really excited to realize I was working on an organic farm and taking care of the land and was really helped with just that information. But that started even reaching deeper layers. A lot more into God and faith side. I started learning or awakening to realizing how similar we are to the plants. So it’s been really satisfying and amazing to see how even in deep composition and compost, you end up with this even more nutrient rich earth. And it’s very similar to the people. Because it’s very similar to people in that after having a difficult life, not being victim, but having a difficult life, I am making the comparison that earth, sometimes you may even think you are living a shitty life, excuse the language, through kind of like all that death, you can be reborn in a very fertile place. How the farm really needs the energy of someone to take care of it. I realized too that the earth needs someone to take care, maybe I need someone to take care of her, not necessarily another person, but like God. And ya know a force, a much bigger force. So it’s been a difficult process, but no not really difficult, just long. It’s been a long past couple years letting things in my life kind of die. In some aspects I am letting things die off and then in others I’m growing and then letting them die off and then growing – a process or a balance of death and life.<sup>338</sup>

This process of letting things die off and be reborn is as true of her faith as it is of her managing the farm and caring for her family. Reyna shares with me her story of coming to the US as a fourteen-year-old from Mexico. Her father was an alcoholic and drug addict; her mother was in a destructive relationship. Witnessing these things, she says, caused “bad weeds [to]

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<sup>337</sup> Ortega, interview.

<sup>338</sup> Ortega, interview.



deeply root in my heart.”<sup>339</sup> She started her family, having four daughters, but could not find happiness. Her transformation came in caring for plants and in that, she saw how God takes care of her. The story is so moving that at a certain point, Reyna, Sanra, and I are all crying. Reyna experienced the God of second chances. She says,

It was really difficult because the weeds were really deep and really strong. But He showed me the way because when all the pain came out of my heart, I really experienced a death and resurrection in that moment and I was able to forgive my parents. Then I could really see how God was creating another life in me. So that’s my relationship with faith. I feel like a plant doesn’t actually have control over anything, but I can have strong roots and let God take care of me.<sup>340</sup>

This view allows her to keep experimenting with plants.

She talks multiple times of an experience at the previous AT farm where she kept planting rows of a vegetable and it would not work. After two times, she thought the soil might have a problem, but in changing her attitude during the third planting, the seedlings emerged. The difference, she says, was in her attitude and relationship to the land and plants and letting go of control. In her own words, she says,

For years, I worked in fields but I didn’t have that connection of seeing the creation. Because before, perhaps, my idea of God is that he’s in the heavens, he’s in the sky, but on the farm, you can see the cycles of life. And not only about just the seeds, so it can be you’re not even working in a farm, that your hands aren’t in the earth, but this pattern of planting and harvesting – it’s in your life. You are always going to harvest what you’ve been planting. So if you’re planting destruction, you’re going to harvest destruction. So if you want to create or recreate your life you’re going to have a resurrection. So that’s really how I see this God, this God of second chances that he will always be there to receive you.<sup>341</sup>

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<sup>339</sup> Ortega, interview.

<sup>340</sup> Ortega, interview.

<sup>341</sup> Ortega, interview.

This theme keeps coming up of God being *in* the earth and what that causes the farmers to see and face. They deal with life and death, resurrection, and creation every day. They are partners in what is real and what sustains life, both relationally and with food.

Though each farmer at AT has their own path, the theme of resurrection did not end with Reyna. Sarah mentions it as well:

I feel like the church has role to play because what we do, we get up every morning to do the impossible and that's resurrection. It's the impossible thing that happened, that you never expected would happen but it happened, and so every Sunday we believe in the resurrection and every day we should believe in the resurrection. So the role of the church is to say "We're gonna choose to do what doesn't make sense and what's gonna be impossible because that is the narrative we have chosen to commit ourselves to." Maybe it doesn't make sense for a secular or some other or even maybe another religious community to think that agriculture, small-scale agriculture, community-based agriculture is a good choice because it's maybe not a good choice in other terms but I feel like within the Christian church if we're committing to Christ in, kind of walking the way that Christ revealed in scripture, we're kind of committing to something that doesn't make any sense which is small-scale agriculture.<sup>342</sup>

Choosing resurrection for the AT farm team means examining their modes of hospitality, inclusiveness, community building and partnership, and their relationships with each other and the land. This manifests in their practices of sharing food, cooking together, and offering cooking classes. They plant and harvest, but with empathy and awareness of what is happening around them. They call others to see these happenings in land blessings and other events the farm hosts. But I also see these themes in a conversation I have with Jeannette as we drive to the last meal we have together after the staff meeting. While I was interviewing Reyna, before lunch, everyone moved out to the field to weed together. "Everyone weeds," Jeannette says as we drive past other farms.<sup>343</sup> And it is in this simple statement that their farm practices transform into

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<sup>342</sup> Nolan, interview.

<sup>343</sup> Personal recording by author, March 4, 2016.

spirituality. Sarah also boils down their spirituality to a simplistic, symbiotic statement: Their work and spirituality is “feeding and being fed.”<sup>344</sup>

This spirituality of feeding and being fed is rooted in noticing tension, seeing how the roots connect, and what roots need to be taken out. They see the connections of land and people. They must slow down enough to build relationships, but still be effective and productive. Their intention is not solely for profit, but for something deeper – to die and resurrect every day. Jeannette sees this in “slowing down and learning about the infinite other lives and ecosystems.”<sup>345</sup> Reyna’s layers of faith continue to go deeper and deeper alongside the plants she works with daily. Sarah calls the AT team architects for spaces of transformation and reconciliation stemming from a spirituality that is very Eucharistic. They break bread together in meetings, but also at their farm church. God is reflected back at them in the sustenance of the Eucharist, but also in the farm and people around them.

Sarah talks about how the church and farm feed each other in a mutually beneficial relationship. On my last weekend of data collection, I take my husband and toddler son to the farm church to see more of what they do. They meet at various sites each month including people’s homes and community gardens. This week they are meeting at the United Methodist Church. This congregation gave their land to the Community Roots Garden. The one acre grows an incredible amount of produce. The community who farms here does not necessarily attend the church. However, the aging church population enjoys seeing the grounds come alive for the families who work in the garden on a weekly basis. Otherwise the grounds would just sit there unused or with grass. We are there on the first Sunday of Pentecost. There is a circle of

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<sup>344</sup> Nolan, interview.

<sup>345</sup> Ban, interview.

hodgepodge chairs and benches around a make-shift table holding the elements of wine, bread, and water. The liturgy and service revolve around these elements and movements: Water of Life, Word of Life, Bread of Life. The water is given to my son, Thatcher, shortly after the service starts to water a plant in the garden. He comes back to where I am seated and stands between my legs. My belly is growing with his little brother and I can't help but think about blood and water as I look at my two boys who grew in my womb. Feeding and being fed.

Erynn, the farm educator, is leading the service today. She talks about coming to the farm and learning about soil. The soil was the vehicle to teach her things she could not understand in her faith, namely death and resurrection. We are invited to say different words and prayers in the service; my husband, Nate, reads the closing prayer. Then we break bread, "Body of Christ, bread of heaven," and drink from the cup, "Blood of Christ, cup of salvation." The bread is made from local honey and more is torn up later as we share in a meal together in the garden. A local chef who attends the church has made a vegetable curry from the garden's bounty. Squash, carrots, and other vegetables speak to and feed a different kind of satisfaction from the meal. One of the volunteers from the garden picks raspberries fresh from the vine and we munch on whole carrots as conversations flow around us in English and Spanish. There are not a ton of people present, maybe ten or twelve. But in this small community, again, hospitality, openness, and an organic flow of welcoming life around us is demonstrated.

By framing their practices and spirituality through the lens of their stories, it is not hard to see why their advocacy goals and dreams are what they are. Their connections to the land and people move them to act on behalf of both. Their stories must continue to be told in churches, school, and in communities. But also, fighting for the rights of laborers, small farmers, young farmers, female farmers, and land accessibility drives their spirits and agendas. They want the

church to invest. Certainly, they realize the Episcopal church in particular has been a main champion of their vision, but it has to extend to investment of education, advocacy, and policy work. This can happen in numerous ways according to the farm team. The church needs to include more diverse voices than white males. Pastors and teachers can bring up the issues of farm workers' rights, abuses, and immigration matters in their lessons. Alternative spaces and opportunities must be brought to the forefront as this can include things like cooking lessons, educational programs, and seeing the land differently which in turn invites more people into the conversation and activism. Sarah talks about money in the pews and investing in small agriculture. There are easy ways to do this as well. From being a CSA pick up location to visiting a farmer, these are ways to partner. They desire each person to value themselves and then with that healthy relationship, they can then reconcile with God, neighbor, and land. If it can happen in a field, then the church should listen to these stories. The impossible happens around the table every week, but the work of the table and Eucharist cannot happen without the work of the soil – the work of life and death – the work of resurrection. AT understands this, practices it, preaches it, and lives it out through activism and hard work every day. They do the impossible – being a small farm and surviving in a tough system – but even more so, they embody resurrection for the sake of relationship and hope in the community around them.

## Chapter 7

### Springstroh Farm, Freedom, Wisconsin

The license plates in Wisconsin read “America’s Dairyland.” It is not hard to see why as I drive through Green Bay and out to the countryside in early Spring. Huge swaths of land are dotted with giant silos and barns. I drive by new gleaming structures and milking facilities standing tall and proud in the still, cold morning. Ironically, I do not see many cows. My eye also catches other dilapidated barns dotting the horizon, silently speaking of a bygone era. I am here in muddy March. The winter is still hanging on while tiny buds of spring work hard to emerge. Indeed, the morning greets me with temperatures in the twenties. I am aware the fields are still thawing out, getting ready to be planted in a matter of weeks with corn, hay, soy, wheat, rye, and oats. Wildflowers are just beginning their cyclical journey to bring color and joy to those who look upon them.

I am on my way to meet the Springstroh family. I met Amber through a contact in the Women Food and Agriculture Network. She is the daughter of Judy, the owner of the farm. When we chatted by phone months earlier, we connected over faith and agrarian writings. I hung up the phone with a renewed sense of energy and enthusiasm after our conversation. That energy and excitement are still with me as I pull up to their farm and see the cows lounging in the sun, making laying in the dirt look enticing. The various structures and silos catch my eye, as does the traditional farm house with its porch and electric candles in the window.

Amber and Judy welcome me to their living room which houses family pictures, a piano, and seating for many. This room holds older arm chairs and couches that are impeccable and well kept. The room looks like it holds well-loved stories that have been in the house for

decades. The first conversation is open and honest, but it is obvious Judy, Amber, and I are just getting to know each other. They are asking me questions about my research and church. I detect they are wanting to know what would bring me all the way from Los Angeles to Wisconsin to hear their story? But it becomes evident very quickly they are more than willing to participate and give me access to their land, farm, and lives.

As the visit unfolds, I sense the history of the Springstroh farm is rooted in God, family, and connectedness to a deeper rhythm and calling. This land has been in the family for almost one hundred years and it is rich with stouthearted, as well as sobering stories, and profound contentment and joy in its inhabitants. The animals and people make up the community of the farm which is about 280 acres. Most of the land is tillable as 230 acres are dedicated to corn, soy, and hay fields. The farm is broken up by a gentle creek called Duck Creek and houses a wooded, forest area too. Some of their property is across the street, but certainly very close by.

John Springstroh's family, John being Judy's husband, founded the farm in 1918 and since then different members of the family have run the farm. John did not take over the farm until his older brother had some serious health issues in 1965 which led to a change of hands. Judy and John were married in October of 1965, but she did not know she was about to become a farmer's wife until the transaction happened overnight. She laughs as she recalls John saying, "We're gonna farm there," and she said "Ooooh we are?"<sup>346</sup> Certainly, they talked about farming, with Judy coming from farming family as well, but they were considering a neighboring property, not John's family farm. The farm was rundown, full of junk cars and chicken coops. But they took it in stride, beginning to make improvements right away and living in a house trailer for a few years. They took down concrete silos and put up Harvestore® silos where high

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<sup>346</sup> Judy Springstroh, interview by author, Freedom, WI, March 20, 2016.

moisture corn and haylage are stored for the cow's feed. They purchased the farm next to theirs, but ended up staying in their family house because the barn on the family property was better for milking cows.

John kept building and improving the structures on the farm, adding a wing to the barn to house more cows; he built a lean-to, a free stall shed, and a feed bunk. He also started a tradition of caring for the land. Judy recalls,

He was a good steward of the land from the beginning. He worked with the county conservation department to complete a three-year plan for the land. It's really been beneficial for the farm, especially to direct the water drainage. He rented tillage equipment when we started. I didn't understand why he did that. I grew up using a plow and that's just what we did. He was mindful of better ways of doing things from the beginning and we followed through on his tradition.<sup>347</sup>

They followed his legacy because he is no longer alive to continue to build it. In December of 1979, the family discovered John had an enlarged heart and heart murmur during hernia surgery. He set up an appointment in February, but after routine farm chores on a Sunday night in January 1980, he came in, laid down on the couch, and passed away. They later found out he had Marfan's syndrome - a genetic disorder characterized by such signs as long arms, fingers, and legs, flat feet, and one's chest sinking in. Judy recalls all of this history as she glances out the window of her eat-in kitchen. In many ways, John is still present on the farm; Judy makes sure his memories live on.

Significance lies in, not only how John was able to get so much done on the farm prior to his death, but how Judy took the reins once he was gone. As the shock settled in, Judy tapped into her roots of growing up on a farm. She quickly understood she would need to get a job no matter what. Working the farm would mean she could be there for her three children who were in

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<sup>347</sup> Springstroh, J., interview.



their elementary school years. The moment she made up her mind to stay on the farm comes quickly to her, despite some feedback. She tells me, “I saw the two older ones take the three-wheeler down the lane after he died. I said to myself, ‘Yeah, we aren’t going anywhere.’ Not everyone thought this was a good idea. Even my own dad told me, ‘You can’t do this, honey.’ I told him that we were going to try.”<sup>348</sup> The words of her dad were not condescending or authoritarian. Rather, in her retelling, he was gentle and only trying to care for her. He quickly jumped on board and became one of the guiding adults in the children’s lives and a main helper on the farm.

Her dad was not the only one who helped. Indeed, this family is cemented in the local community. People rallied around them and still are engaged with the farm. The stories told to me revolve around an uncle, cousins, friends, and neighbors all contributing in different seasons. Judy can remember agronomists, other farm workers, interns, and volunteers by name spanning decades as she tells me the history of the farm. Family is first, though, as Amber and Judy live down the street from Judy’s eldest daughter Tami, her husband, Jay, and their two children, Sam and Gracie. They are a constant presence on the farm, too. Brett, Judy and John’s son, brother of Amber and Tami, worked hard next to his mom as well and also engaged in building a business, but once again, tragedy struck the family when Brett passed away in 2000. Since Marfan syndrome is genetic, Judy had the children tested after John’s death. Brett had the characteristics. Surgery was done to correct it and seemingly he was fine. But at 30 he had a heart attack and did not pull through the next surgery.

Once again, the family had to rally and it was Amber who decided to stay on site to help her mom. She attended college in Madison and had a job in Milwaukee when everything shifted

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<sup>348</sup> Springstroh, J., interview.

again. She returned to her family home to write music with her brother. It was just three months later that he died. It was then, as Amber tells it, she understood why God brought her home:

I took a job in Milwaukee. I worked in the business world for a few years. When I was 24 years old, I used my vacation time to attend my grandfather's funeral and then to stay with my brother after his first open heart surgery. These were heavy moments. After this, I felt Jesus was telling me to go home, to be closer to my family, and to make music. This was a time of sorting through my faith in Jesus, my place in the family and who Jesus wanted me to be. I wasn't sure why I was moving home though. Then three months later, Brett died. I had my answer. Jesus had something for me to do here and He was getting me ready for it.<sup>349</sup>

She continues, though, telling me the deeper reasons behind coming back to the farm, "I know how important this farm is to my mom. I know how important this farm was to my dad. When the Bible says, 'Honor your father and mother,' I think it means it. Part of honoring my mother is tied to this very specific place whether I like it or not. She was widowed at 36 and then lost her son at a young age. It seemed right to come and work alongside her."<sup>350</sup> And she has since 2000. Amber works alongside her mother each day. Tami, the elder sister, and her family also participate in chores and taking care of the farm. They are bonded through this place, their story, and their connection to each other.

Themes and disciplines begin to appear in the Springstroh family farm memories. Their life is characterized by coming to terms with what it means to live in a fallen world. They have known grief; they have known loss. Yet every morning at 4am, Judy rises to greet the day and welcome joy and contentment in what God calls her to do. The Judy I first meet in the living room is quite different from the Judy who takes me outside to show me the ropes of farm chores the first evening I am there. My belly, hidden under my layers of sweaters and coats, is

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<sup>349</sup> Amber Springstroh, interview by author, Freedom, WI, March 21, 2016.

<sup>350</sup> Springstroh, A., interview.

expanding and for the most part the second trimester energy is fueling me now as I follow her into the milking barn. It is there that her grandson, Sam, has already brought in the cows and is in the process of cleaning udders and hooking up the milking device.

But what I really notice is Judy. From the short walk from her house to the barn, she embodies a completely different energy now. It is not that in the house she was not engaged, but a spark seems to find her as she bustles quickly around the barn. She shovels hay, mixes feed, and shows me what each machine does. I ask if I can help, but she is very protective of my state from the moment we meet too. However, I get the impression that she just very much likes the work and thoroughly enjoys doing it. I must admit, I am enjoying watching her and following in her wake. She talks to the cows and checks in with Sam. The routine is the same every day, but instead of invoking monotony, it appears to bring her great joy.

We run into her neighbor who happens to swing by the farm. People do this a lot here, I am told, and I get the sense of that while I am visiting. He retired a few years ago, despite being about a decade younger than Judy. He gives me a warm greeting and a jovial response about how Judy just keeps going. Her community has witnessed over the years what I have seen in a matter of hours: She's 72 now and has no intention of slowing down as she states, "I'm not going to retire until God makes me retire. As long as I'm able to work, I would like to work."<sup>351</sup> Living out God's plan by working is truly what she is called to do.

For Amber, the work on the farm did not call her home from the business world as much as a call to honor her mother. As mentioned above, the call to honor her parents is something that comes up in our visits both on and off the record. In all of it, she has experienced God's

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<sup>351</sup> Springstroh, J., interview.

faithfulness on the farm. She explains to me what that has felt like during the seasons that have come and gone,

Now I am confident that it was God's will for me to be here. I wasn't always sure of this. I asked Him again and again if this was really what He wanted. I was looking for a plan B. Finally, I've gotten to a point where I can look up, laugh and say, "No plan B, huh?" As I've walked faithfully beside my mom, I have learned how faithful God is. He is always teaching me more about who He is. All my life lessons are tied to this farm. It's hard for me to separate myself from this place now, but I do think that everything I've learned here can be used in ministry.<sup>352</sup>

Her mother also acknowledges what this choice has cost Amber as she reflects, "She's been on the farm for 15 years. She thought this was where God called her to be and she has just been a faithful, faithful girl. I don't know if she always wants to be here. Maybe God will move her in a new direction now that Sam is taking over more responsibilities. We'll see what happens." Later on Judy also says, "It's been a hard life for Amber. She lost her dad. She lost her grandpa. She lost her brother. She has experienced a lot of loss at a young age."<sup>353</sup>

But this is not the end of Amber's story. She lets the farm teach her about spirituality, place, and God so much that the first day I am there, she identifies herself as the farm's philosopher. She said this in passing, but learning about how much she reads, studies, and discerns, I can see the dedication to her faith in the way a philosopher dreams about ideas. She chagrins the title later on when reviewing the draft because she does not want to present herself as an expert or experienced scholar. Rather, it comes from her life rhythm of reading numerous books, praying, and doing devotions. It is her way of seeing the bigger picture and finding her faith in this point in time. Her strong conviction of living in the tension of a fallen world has given her a lens to see the world. She recognizes her losses, as does Judy, but life on the farm

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<sup>352</sup> Springstroh, A., interview.

<sup>353</sup> Springstroh, J., interview.

went on and so did they. They did not choose a different life, but chose to live a life that was about “Being here wholeheartedly. Being present. Watching,” Amber says.<sup>354</sup> Part of this focusing on the present lens has led her to see the beauty in the world around her and read the scriptures differently too. She understands God; not as a condemner, but as a kind Father who greets her with unfailing love and understanding in the early mornings on the farm. She is not trying to seek God “out there,” wherever that might be, but rather right where she is. In turn, she looks to Jesus’ examples of being contemplative and how he used nature to teach as a model for herself. She finds herself slowing down to witness Christ in the world around her.

Part of seeing God and Jesus in the world around her is understanding God’s design, order, and purpose amidst a fallen world. It would be great to live in Eden, Amber tells me in our first visit, but we don’t. God is in control and “He knows what He is doing,” she continues. I can sense Amber and Judy see God in control of everything from their beloved cows to their family history as the days unfold. These themes keep emerging: they are not in control and finding purpose and redemption in their story despite what has happened in their family. As Amber tells it,

We’re not a grand feminist farm. We are a female-led farm through circumstance. I do think there’s a difference in that. How do you best honor God with what you’ve been given? There are many wonderful ideas about how things are supposed to be, but I think the Bible tells us how things are. There is a strong Creation, Fall, Redemption and Glory theme that works itself out all around us. I would like everything to be perfect, but it’s not going to happen the way I think it should happen. Much of life is out of my control. Even if I do everything right, bad things are going to happen. Even when things go well, I can’t take the credit for it. In everything, I ask, “Okay God, what can I learn from this?” But most of the time, it’s just life.<sup>355</sup>

In this attitude, Amber has found a contentment in the present while waiting for God’s glory.

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<sup>354</sup> Springstroh, A., interview.

<sup>355</sup> Springstroh, A., interview.

It is this contentment and framework that has led her to consider her roots and finding God right where she lives. She knows death and decay will come no matter what happens, whether that be with people or with cows, while she waits for Christ's return. How we live in the meantime matters to her. She says, "There's so many voices telling me not to love my roots. Even within the Christian church. God does not call every person to be a missionary in a foreign land. He asks some of us to stay and be who He wants us to be right where we are."<sup>356</sup> So how does she live now? She tells me,

I live in relation to God, other people, and the land. The agrarian literature has helped me to understand how to live in relation to the land. Your faith is worked out here too. The reality is that we live within a created order that God put in place. It is a fallen world, but God keeps us in this world for a time. After man sinned, God said that they would have to fight thorns and then they'd return to dust. He didn't take them out of the world though. I think the agrarian writers gave me permission to start asking questions and consider what it all means.<sup>357</sup>

Agrarian writers Wendell Berry and Ellen Davis as well as some of her favorite Bible study leaders, the Briscoes, have taught her to re-consider her life on the farm. For instance, she says they "gave me that permission to start loving my roots, to start slowing down, to start embracing this quiet kind of humble stance of not knowing everything and being okay with it but still joining in and being a steward where you are. We are redeemed by the blood of Jesus and heading to glory, but what we do here matters. We are stewards and meant to reflect God here."<sup>358</sup>

Indeed, as I walk through the barn this reflection is not just a theory but applied practice as well.

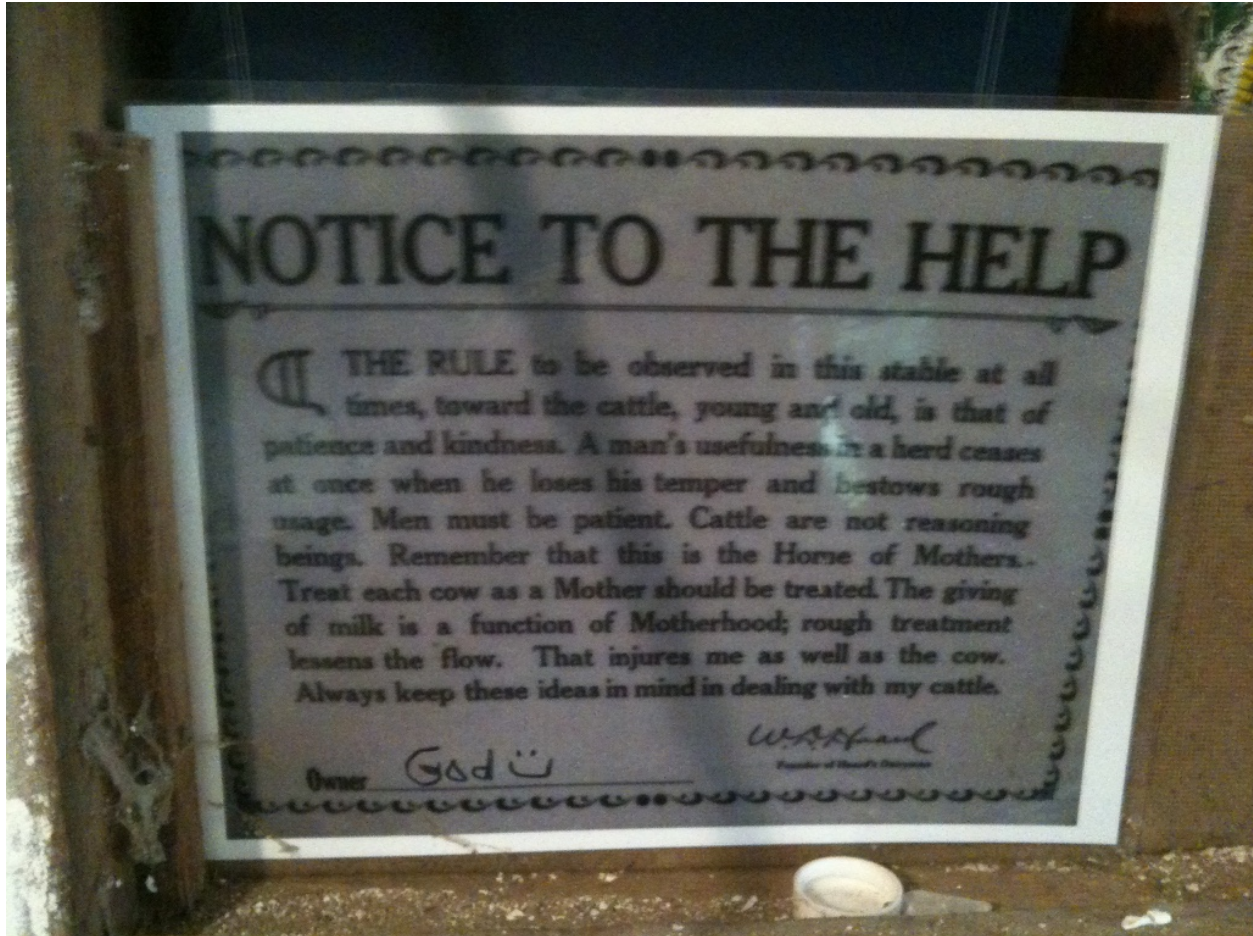
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<sup>356</sup> Springstroh, A., interview.

<sup>357</sup> Springstroh, A., interview.

<sup>358</sup> Springstroh, A., interview.

This sign hangs right next to one of the doors:



(Picture credit: Kristin Ritzau)

The attitude of creation and fall, redemption and glory follows this farm. Anchored in this way of thinking and living, their days play out with patience, kindness, and endurance with these giant animals. God reigns, but they are the actors in this pageant. On this farm run by mother and daughters, the sign also stands out to me for its inference to motherhood as a guidepost in farming. The giving of milk, such a female act, is what this farm is all about. What has developed is a respect from the community and a living into their own embodiment as women. Amber has seen this since she was young. She reflects, “Mom was forced to become everything

at once—mother and father and farmer. Through the farm, she just gave us a ton of stability.”<sup>359</sup>

For Judy this is nothing new though. While other daughters of farmers were not allowed to work on the farm, Judy was raised with the notion that everyone was part of the crew. Her dad, uncle, and grandpa all had 80 acres each and part of her memories growing up were taking the threshing machine to each farm and shocking the grain.

This foundation instilled in Judy an attitude where women were not separate from the men. She explains, “I don’t feel it’s any different than being a man. This is what God has given us to do. This is what we do. There are some things that we can’t do, but I am thankful I can call my son-in-law when something big comes up. My grandson can also help now. But we’ve never been looked down as a woman farmer. I mean they’ve probably respected us for keeping the farm going.”<sup>360</sup> Amber mirrors this sentiment saying,

Biblically, I think it’s important to be a woman and not a poor imitation of a man. I’m not going to be able to farm like a man. This farm will look different. One example is my lack of upper body strength. I don’t have the strength to manhandle anything. As a woman, my management will be based on patience, kindness, doing what I can and asking for help when needed. We submit to God as the ultimate Farmer. My mom is the head of this farm. She’s the elder. I believe it’s Biblically correct to submit to her authority too.<sup>361</sup>

And they both see the community respecting them more for what they are doing rather than questioning their actions.

This attitude of respect runs deep in our conversations of the surrounding farms in the community. There is an attitude of respecting other people’s farming operations. Be it a large family farm or a small one, Judy repeatedly says she minds her own business and has not run

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<sup>359</sup> Springstroh, A., interview.

<sup>360</sup> Springstroh, J., interview.

<sup>361</sup> Springstroh, A., interview.



into any problems with anyone. More on this point will be discussed later, but one thing to note is how distinct their operation is at Springstroh Farm.

The dairy farm is medium sized with 56 milking stalls for their cows. They strive to keep the stalls full in their closed herd operation. Closed meaning they do not bring any outside cattle into the farm through buying and selling. They birth their own calves and raise the heifers. Because they are small operation, the calves stay with their mothers for one day before being separated. They are then raised in the calf barn before being moved to what Judy labels the “classrooms” for the heifers before they are inseminated and give birth. At any given time there are 45-50 young stalk (heifers) waiting to move into the milking barn when they are ready.

On the last day, Judy takes me on a tour of the surrounding farms. I’m struck, again, by not seeing any cows outside but just acre upon acre of fields. All of the fields are for feed, but where are the cows, I wonder? We pass by huge buildings which Judy says are “family farms.” However, she implies it is a bit more convoluted as there might be two brothers who run and own the farm, but that they have “gone corporate.” These operations are highly regulated and house anywhere from 500 to 9,000 cows. I try to wrap my mind around these facilities. The cows are not let outside, which strikes me as harsh, I write in my notes, but does not rattle Judy in the least. They spend all day on cement and are separated from their calves right at birth. But Judy is only full of compliments.

She does not waste much time on comparison and quickly says, “We are who we are and they are who they are.” The two cannot be compared and she has never tried to compare. Their farm is profitable, debt free, and regulated as well. She ponders how it might be different if they were just starting out and could not afford land or need money to retire— which is why many people sell their land and cows to the larger dairies. Judy is not a woman who wastes any time

pondering what might have been or how things could be different. She is acutely aware if John were alive, he might have expanded into one of these larger farms, but she did not head in the that direction. I ask her why and why the intention to stay small while the dairies around her expanded into these giant operations? “For us, it was what we could handle,” she explains.<sup>362</sup> Her kids were her priority along with not taking on more than she was able. She kept a garden and made sure her kids were able to participate in activities like sports and 4H. “We weren’t going to get bigger. We were all happy with it just the way it was. It was profitable and even our accountant now will tell you it’s a profitable farm. If we expand, where does it stop? Then your heifer facility isn’t big enough. Your calf facility isn’t big enough. Your land isn’t enough. It just keeps going. We had what we needed,” Judy tells me with conviction.<sup>363</sup> This is also something Amber appreciates about their farm as well. She says, “You don’t have to strive in agriculture. You don’t have to reach for that extra handful when you have daily bread. But it’s not my place to judge others. I am responsible to God for what He has given me as His steward. I don’t have the time or energy to worry about what everyone else is doing.”<sup>364</sup> Amber’s words about reaching for extra and Judy’s comments about expansion upon expansion hit a cord, especially as it connects to their relationship with church as well.

Amber relates church and agriculture when I ask, “How could the church encourage this idea of rootedness?” She replies thoughtfully,

Our church has grown rapidly and has over 5,000 people attending each Sunday. It has an urban feel to it. It tends to operate more like a corporation than a family. I’ve worked in the corporate business world and I’ve worked in the family business. They’re different. I think there’s beauty in a grassroots approach to church that appreciates what God has

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<sup>362</sup> Springstroh, J., interview.

<sup>363</sup> Springstroh, J., interview.

<sup>364</sup> Springstroh, A., interview.

given and looks for ways to be fruitful. There's tension as the church gets bigger though just like in agriculture. It loses something when it becomes so large.<sup>365</sup>

Her next words ring true of their family philosophy of seeking contentment, joy, and hard work while also building relationships, "How big can you be without losing your humanity? How big can you be and still looking people in the eye? The questions aren't that different. I was forced by circumstance to wrestle and struggle with the questions as a farmer. Now I see they relate to the church too."<sup>366</sup> Her work makes her grapple with meaning, purpose, stewardship, and issues in the bible that people normally do not face on a day to day basis. This meaning, how Jesus enjoyed and taught with nature metaphors, and biblically, how do we treat animals and our parents? Her convictions are not about condemning or comparing the church, but wrestling with what it means to be in partnership with God, each other, and the land.

Partnership becomes hard when the church is thousands of people. Judy laments this, too, despite a love for their evangelical Christian Missionary Alliance church. When I ask how they could partner with their church, she tells me, "I don't think our farm could partner with our big regional church. I don't know how we could do it. It's a whole different venue than a smaller church. Even in Forest Junction, I grew up in a church with only a couple hundred people. It's a whole different thing."<sup>367</sup> Her memories of how the church came together when it was smaller are sweet, and she shares about Tami taking her homegrown vegetables to a smaller church as well. She recognizes the difference and is okay with the current level of involvement of the farm being church picnics and worship gatherings on different occasions. The church seems to keep

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<sup>365</sup> Springstroh, A., interview.

<sup>366</sup> Springstroh, A., interview.

<sup>367</sup> Springstroh, J., interview.

its own programs close at hand, but the Springstroh's doors are wide open for whomever would like to stop by.

The partnerships that manifest, then, are most fruitful with the education community around them. They participate in something called Adventures in Dairyland where elementary schoolers come to learn about the farm. Judy reflects on how tiring it is, but also the meaning behind it. She relishes in the fact that one teacher says it is her class' favorite field trip of the year. Her attitude of openness and educating people on what they do is unwavering as she says, "The farm is not just ours. It's for everyone so we try to keep it looking nice. We want to make a good impression. We try to keep it clean. The kids coming out from the city can see the milk they are drinking is from a clean farm. Many people worry that it's dirty—the bacteria, germs, whatever. It's not. It can't be."<sup>368</sup> This sentiment is reflected by both Judy and Amber in different conversations that people with no exposure to farming worry about antibiotics, sick cows, and dirty conditions. But this small farm opens their doors so people can see there is nothing to worry about here. These cows are loved. The land is cared for, and they have just enough to be content and honor God in their work while not comparing their operation to others.

This attitude of being enough guides their farming philosophy in a larger schema as well as on a daily basis. They recognize their role as caretakers of the cows and also of the land. Each day they rise before the sun – around 3:00 or 4:00 a.m.— to milk the cows. After the cows have eaten and been milked, they are led outside. I notice the days I am there, a couple of cows remain in their stalls. Amber tells me they are older and just gave birth a few weeks ago so they are allowed to take it easy. The rest of the morning is spent scraping up excrement, putting new hay in their stalls, mixing feed and putting it out for the afternoon milking. At 3pm the same process

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<sup>368</sup> Springstroh, J., interview.

with just a few variances will happen again. No holidays, no breaks (unless someone steps in); each day is the same.

The seasons also bring their own rhythms. As Amber puts it,

You don't feel the same in winter that you do in summer. It's a very different burden. It feels different on your body and on your soul. I think I'm learning to embrace the depth of winter as opposed to trying to fight it or trying to pretend it's a summer day. It's not a summer day and it does not feel the same. Those are the biggest contrasts. Spring is exciting just as it should be. It's resurrection. It's life. It's everything new. You're celebrating everything new. Summer is just summer. Summer is about community here. Many days are spent with the family caring for the cows and harvesting crops. The evenings are times to relax as the sun sets and we unwind. We also try to get out to Lake Michigan a few times. Fall is beautiful with all its changes. Our workload changes a bit, but we know what needs to be done. It's time to get everything sealed up and ready for winter. It is pretty consistent.<sup>369</sup>

Partnership is noted throughout the whole operation, in each season. It invokes contemplation in the discipline and rigor of each day and each season. The rhythm is something that invokes joy in Judy and peace in Amber. It keeps them grounded to God and place. The forest, fields, and creek surrounding the farm invite reflection on finding meaning right where one is. Amber has found meaning in studying the scriptures and walking the land. She points out emerging wildflowers on our walk in their forest and encourages me to sit on a bench with her next to the creek until the "clouds move faster than the water." It requires concentration, but also a settling in as my breathing slows and I take in my surroundings. There is such beauty here.

The beauty found here is fueled by a fluid partnership between God, the scriptures, the ecosystem, animals, and people. When Amber talks about the book of Malachi discussing calves leaping when being released from the stall, she gets excited saying, "I know what that looks like!"<sup>370</sup> She longs for redemption and glory to be known in this world, but also understands we

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<sup>369</sup> Springstroh, A., interview.

<sup>370</sup> Springstroh, A., interview.

are to do our best to find Christ in the present. This noticing has led to the healthy relationship with their farm size and animals as well as passing on a legacy to the next generation. Both Amber and Judy are energized when discussing passing on the farm to Sam and Gracie, Judy's grandson and granddaughter. My path crosses with Sam's in the barn one of the afternoons I am there. He has just taken on milking by himself in the past three months. I can sense how tickled and proud Amber and Judy are with this development. Judy is still caught by surprise as she tours me around the farm and finds chores already done by Sam. "I didn't know he knew how to do that," she says. But what strikes me is a conversation I have with Sam as he shows me how to milk. "You like doing this?" I ask with curiosity. His response catches me off guard when he says, "When everything else is so chaotic, I can come here and it's the same."<sup>371</sup> His rhythm and discipline for this work speak volumes as I continue to watch this sixteen year old take on more than just chores. He has witnessed and now is owning for himself the legacy Judy, John, Amber, and Tami, his mom, embrace.

Now, it will take some time for Sam and Gracie to take over the farm as they are only 16 and 12. They have their own ideas about the land, animals, and equipment, but there is a profound sense of settling into a new season as I get to know this family at the beginning of spring. Spring is not just literal here; it is a metaphor for what is happening around them in the land and in their family. The practices that shaped the Springstroh Farm for the past three decades and beyond have taken root and now are being passed on. I can sense this from Amber honoring her mother, to her desire to live and make peace in this place, and Judy's desire to welcome anyone who comes her way. Judy's treatment of neighbor, be they human or animal, sets the tone for her family. She has spent her years embracing her suffering and learning from it.

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<sup>371</sup> Personal recording by author, March 19, 2016.

She tears up in our interview recollecting her memories, but not one for pity or wallowing, soon she is sharing recipes with me for cheesecake.

This family makes peace in the tension of creation/fall and life/death. As Amber noted earlier, bad things are still going to happen, so how does one continue to live amongst this tension? The scriptures are paramount here – citing from Proverbs, Malachi, Corinthians, and Philippians (to name a few) in their interviews. But so are the land and the animals. Their spirituality is an embodiment of God being in control of everything. That is their beacon. Amber and Judy each have their individual expressions of this belief. Amber reflects on this when she says, “embracing this quiet kind of humble stance of not knowing everything and being okay with it but still joining in and being a steward where you are.”<sup>372</sup> As in other places in the interview and visit, she is okay not being in control, but also realizing her role on the farm. Judy embraces her role on the farm, too, “You know we don’t really worry too much about anything. God kind of takes care of everything.”<sup>373</sup> I can see these notions lived out in their daily lives. God takes care of everything as they have not had control in their lives when it has come to tragedy. But they embrace the suffering, and instead they choose to take care of the land and animals around them.

Their faith is lived out on the farm and I could see that as I awoke on the last morning of my visit with them to milk the cows. The frost greets me as I walk out to my car in the dark. But the darkness does not last long as the sun silently rises in my rearview mirror. I pull the car over to the side of the highway to take a picture of the sun greeting the land.

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<sup>372</sup> Springstroh, A., interview.

<sup>373</sup> Springstroh, J., interview.



(Picture credit: Kristin Ritzau)

I soon realize this land is being greeted by farmers all around me each day before the sun even rises. I get to the farm around 6:00a.m. Amber and Judy are in the midst of chores. The cows are milked already and eating the last of their food. Their rhythm – Judy and Amber as well as the cows -- does not miss a beat once I join them. They show me what happens during the morning routine, and I am invited to participate in shoveling manure into the gutter system and filling each stall with hay for the afternoon milking. Judy takes me around again to demonstrate how the manure is mechanically moved through the barn into the slurry. It is the only time I almost gag from the smell, but I catch myself and find myself also appreciating how it all works together. The manure is not wasted, as it will be redistributed into the fields to prep for spring



planting. Nothing is lacking here and nothing is wasted. The cows are happy and loved. Judy and Amber are working hard so we can enjoy a farmer's breakfast after chores. It is a dance, a rhythm that can only be appreciated by witnessing it all come together.

The word rhythm comes up on multiple occasions and Amber expresses this embodied spirituality well,

So you come into this rhythm of life and your character is what is laid bare. You can't hide your faith here. I like to have big projects to do for Jesus, but sometimes I hide behind them. Projects aren't a bad thing, but when God takes them away and brings you back to a simple life and a simple faith in Christ, are you ready? It's been very challenging through all these years. The life on the farm runs deep. All the experiences keep drawing you back to the Bible. Always learning.<sup>374</sup>

Judy's words break it down to simply this: "This is the day that the Lord hath made. I will rejoice and be glad in it."<sup>375</sup> And I can see that whether it is 6am or 5pm. She loves her work and loves God. The relationship is symbiotic and fuels her. It fuels her enough that a month after I leave the farm, I hear Judy had a heart attack, but bounced back already. Amber explains in our correspondence, "Mom is doing really well. We feel it was a sacred moment for us as a family. It was a moment where the past, present and future laid itself out before us. It was an Ebenezer type moment for us (See 1 Samuel 7:12) Blessings to you, my sister in Christ!"<sup>376</sup> Worried from afar, I ask how I can pray. Amber tells me in a later email, "You can offer prayers of thanksgiving to the God who goes before us and strengthens us day by day. Mom is doing well. She is back to normal."<sup>377</sup> I look up 1 Samuel 7:12 NIV to see this: "Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer,<sup>[b]</sup>saying, 'Thus far

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<sup>374</sup> Springstroh, A., interview.

<sup>375</sup> Springstroh, J., interview.

<sup>376</sup> Amber Springstroh, email message to author, May 10, 2016.

<sup>377</sup> Amber Springstroh, email message to author, May 11, 2016.

the LORD has helped us.’” And I have no questions about what that means. Tragedy averted this time, but not without deep recognition and thanksgiving to God for peace in plans they have no control over – the Lord has helped them and will continue to help them no matter the circumstances. I have no doubt their doors will remain open for God to work in and through them, their story, their family, and their farm for a long time to come.

## Chapter 8

### Luther Coffee Farm, Kona, Hawaii

Hawaii. Just the word conjures images of beaches, sunglasses, clear water, relaxation and vacation. Perhaps a luau comes to mind or a lei of beautiful flowers. When I tell people one of the farms I am studying is in Hawaii, I am met with looks and comments of, “How nice for you.” But the reality is, when one digs beneath the surface of the colonized, week-long condo-stay, Hawaii presents a much more complex picture of culture and agriculture. Louise Hanna, the owner of Luther Coffee Farm, along with her husband Bob, feels this complexity deeply. She faces her retirement career as a coffee farmer with understanding, grace, and a profound sense of responsibility to the land, native Hawaiians, and the ecosystem of animals, plants, and humans around her.

I begin this farm story at the end. Louise and I spent three days walking the grounds, working in the pineapple patch, relocating flowers, and teaching me about native Hawaiian plants and coffee farming. My belly is getting bigger and I took more breaks as I watched Louise carry a backpack of neem to spray on her beloved plants. This spray helps with infection and spores on the plants. The recorded interviews at the dining room table were some of the most detailed so far, and as we drive to the airport on our final morning together I am full of gratitude for all that was shared in the past few days: words, meals, passion, and a new connection. I am leaving with gifts of coffee and dried pineapple, but much more too.

On the long drive to the airport, coming down from the side of the volcano, we chat some more. I end up telling Louise about the next phase of my research: I want to interview veterans with PTSD who start farms. I share a quote I cannot get out of my head from a farmer featured in

the trailer for the documentary *Ground Operations: Battlefields to Farmfields*. He says, “As a combat veteran, I was involved with a lot of destruction. Shifting that to be a creator, seeing something thrive, it does something on a very deep and spiritual level I think.”<sup>378</sup> I look over and see Louise brimming with emotion. She understands that, she says, the healing that can take place by becoming a farmer. “I need to tell you the rest of the story. Remember when I said it was the most painful time in my life? When I laid down under a tree and hugged the earth?”<sup>379</sup>

I reflect on one of our conversations from a previous day. Louise told me, “nature is the place where I experience God most. And that it has provided me the most comfort at the very worst times in my life. I remember the very worst thing that ever happened to me, the only thing I could do – the only thing I could think of to take away the pain and the feeling of just utter desolation was to lie down flat on the ground under a tree and hug the earth.”<sup>380</sup> In the moment of the recording, it did not seem appropriate to ask what the “worst” item was. If she was not offering it at the time of the interview, then it was not my job to pry into matters that were not surfacing. My job as a researcher was to be open to what Louise wanted to talk about when it came to the questions. The information that seemed important was the connection Louise has with the earth. Trees, soil, relationship to the land, these things healed her in a desolate time. But there was more to the story.

“I was on my way to the dean’s office to drop out of college because I was pregnant.”<sup>381</sup> Her life forever changed in a community that was not willing to change with her. All parents

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<sup>378</sup> “GROUND OPERATIONS: Battlefields to Farmfields Official Trailer,” YouTube video, 1:51, posted by GroundOperations, Dec. 11, 2012. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZskF1VwvZSU>.

<sup>379</sup> Author’s journal entry, April 8, 2016.

<sup>380</sup> Louise Hanna, interview by author Kona, HI, April 6, 2016.

<sup>381</sup> Author personal journal entry, April 8, 2016.

involved were upset. The baby's father wanted her to give the child up for adoption. It is through this lens of adoption, of seeking connection, healing, and restoration after desolation, isolation, and heartache, I see Louise's comments and her work on the farm more clearly.

The story of adoption now colors our visit as I reflect on the few days I spent high up in the clouds above Kona. Louise's life is shaped by rhythms of the heartache of giving up a child for adoption, surviving breast cancer, raising children, and a divorce. Planting trees heals her and gives her peace. Her work caring for the land does more, though, as I witness in her story a woman who cares for the marginalized and oppressed human and nonhuman communities around her. She can see those who others may have forgotten. She gets as much joy from serving the land as the land gives to her and what unfolds in our interviews is also easily witnessed in our tour of the coffee farm and all the wonder it holds.

Before I even arrive in Hawaii, Louise offered me free lodging and food at their home and a ride from my hotel and back to the airport. Her hospitality speaks volumes before I even know her story. She makes sure I am well fed, rested, and take breaks in our short tenure together. But in our time, the layers are many as the conversation flowed. She and her husband, Bob, are equal partners in this venture. They do their parts, Bob with woodworking, running the tractor, and weeding. Louise is the caretaker of seedlings and guardian of the native trees. I can tell they care deeply for each other and for this place they call home most of the year.

Home is a 6.6 acre coffee farm high on the side of the Mauna Loa volcano on the Big Island of Hawaii. It is a rural area of Hawaii, so much so that their water is a catchment system with a large cistern off the side of the house. They pick up drinking water in town and take their trash and recyclables back into town. As far as the land, six acres is dedicated to the 4,800 coffee trees. This is considered a fairly large coffee farm. The largest of coffee farms rarely exceed ten

acres. Their area of Hawaii is not commercialized, but that does not mean industrialized chemicals like Round-Up are not used – as they were before Louise asked her farm manager to stop. The labor is intense with coffee trees needing to be picked, pruned, and fertilized by hand. Then the owners sell the coffee cherry to processors. Louise describes it as a gentleman's farming venture. Most of the year there are chores, but it is only intense a few months of the year.

They bought this property over ten years ago and moved here permanently in 2011. Witnessing their routine is a sacred endeavor. Louise and Bob do tai chi on their deck every morning, ending with a kiss. I watch as I sip my coffee, grown feet from me of course. I am mesmerized by their fluid movements; they are doing their routine separately but they are also connected by something deeper. As I take turns watching their movements and the trees around them, I am struck by how at home they are here miles above the beach, almost off the grid.

The landscape is dotted not only with coffee trees, but large trees too. Louise and Bob gave the trees names such as Hansel, Gretel, Isolde, Peter, Paul, and Mary. In my notes, I reflect on this: "[Louise] says it's for directional purposes – i.e. look between Peter and Mary – but one senses the trees have come into their names."<sup>382</sup> Native trees are their passion. I am made aware of this from the first email exchange when Louise wrote this:

I should tell you that our farm is a coffee farm and I don't know if you include that as food. Our main interest is in Native Hawaiian plants which we are planting in amongst the coffee trees. So we are attempting to raise bird food, provide habitat for native birds and perpetuate the indigenous and endemic Hawaiian plant species and improve the care of the soil. Our second objective is to provide income for our coffee workers.<sup>383</sup>

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<sup>382</sup> Author personal journal entry, April 7, 2016.

<sup>383</sup> Louise Hanna, email message to author, January 27, 2016.

This is the guiding thesis statement of their work. But I am seeking what undergirds those statements and goals.

From the first day, I notice their passion towards this place. In my journal, I discuss the initial walk we took around the property. Louise points out every plant; she knows their Hawaiian names and the genealogy. Her desire is to convert the entire property to native trees and plants, but it is not that simple. Over the course of our visit I become familiar with the tension she faces. As she explains, “The major tension for me is, yes, I would like to get rid of most of the coffee so that I did not have to worry about that labor force. But, I have to worry about that labor force! They’re a part of my community.”<sup>384</sup> And she takes this to heart. Ramon, her longtime coffee manager, oversees the harvest and picking of the coffee cherry and pruning of the trees. From the 4,800 trees, 52,000 pounds of coffee cherries are picked. This then becomes 5,200 pounds of coffee. Louise picks and keeps 600 pounds of coffee cherry for herself and her family and friends, and then Ramon sells the rest of it for his income. Louise’s arrangement with him is that he receives 80% of the gross whereas she takes 20% for the incidentals in running the farm. Her reasoning? “That’s a faith call. It’s kind of like reverse share cropping where the sharecropper earns the most money and the landowner is just providing the opportunity. Because we do pay for all the chemicals too. So, the farmworkers make the major share of the income from the farm and that was really just us saying, ‘You know what, we have enough income. We need to share.’”<sup>385</sup> This attitude of sharing and hospitality is highlighted more and more as our visit continues.

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<sup>384</sup> Hanna, interview.

<sup>385</sup> Hanna, interview.

Sharing for her does not stop with the coffee. Her stories are peppered with examples of sharing produce from their vegetables and fruit. They routinely take lemons and avocados down to the beach. She makes muffins for the farmworkers when they come to harvest the coffee cherry. Perhaps some of the strongest stories of her hospitality and heart are when her faith intertwines with her community. Her community is not just human as her love of plants and her surroundings continues to come through. But when she leaves the property, her passion and hospitality go with her. She helps with a prison ministry at her church and a Christmas party for the marginalized Marshall Islander people in their community. Her aim in these projects is never to be the center of attention or to do it for an ego boost. Rather, she sees these groups as needing a place to be seen, to gather, to be listened to, and needing help. Her job is not to assimilate or appropriate, but come alongside and offer her gifts and her assistance as an ally and friend. She takes theologian Larry Rasmussen's ideas to heart when she tells me, "I think that Larry Rasmussen's saying - that we no longer have the Lion's club, and the Kiwanis club, and the social clubs to lead us; that movements that are counter-capitalistic are best fostered in faith communities."<sup>386</sup> Louise is fueling the counter-capitalistic endeavors even when the church is not, though.

Originally, the vision for their Hawaiian home was to be a pastor's retreat for the Lutheran congregation. They even left their keys with the president of the congregation in case someone needed a place to stay. A volunteer group came as well as a pastor who needed a break. But the church is complicated in Hawaii. The mesh of culture, native Hawaiians, snowbird retirees, and socio economic issues does not always meld well. One story stood out of a retired

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<sup>386</sup> Hanna, interview.



principle who, for his retirement, was sent to be a pastor in Hawaii. The story did not end well as Louise explained,

The church wanted to re-do the garden around the church. And these two native Hawaiian people said, “We ought to plant -native plants! We could plant dry-land Taro here. We could plant native shrubs.” And the pastor who came from Alaska, and before that, Maine, said, “No, no, we need to have these other things here; that are easy to take care of and that are...you know...” and so there is that... Robbie [Native Hawaiian] actually left the church. I actually heard people in the middle of that church stand up in the middle of the sermon and say, “That’s it! I’m outta here!” And walk out the back door. Because of what was being said in the sermon ... So, but that was Robbie, standing up for his truth. And it is... and what the pastor said was, “I’m glad you feel free to express yourself.” But they’re always trying to run that pastor out on a rail. It’s amazing. And it’s not grace-filled. But... so, I’ve seen that tension within the groups. The truth is, if you live on this island for a long time, for some reason people need to feel that they know all the answers and that when newcomers come, they don’t understand. And, in the churches part of it is that it’s very expensive to bring a pastor here. You know the normal thing is somebody comes for an interview. Well, that’s not 200 bucks for your mileage. That’s \$1200 for your plane ticket. And so they tend to hire the first person that comes because they don’t want to double up on that \$1200 expense. And then, once the pastor gets here and they’re not really the pastor they need, they try and get rid of ‘em. Because they’re angry that they paid so much money to get ‘em here. And it’s not the right person – so that’s actually what I’ve seen over and over again. Don’t want an outsider. We want someone who understands the culture here. We want someone who will just listen to us, and just... we don’t want a leader. We want a follower. And because we know what we need. And we know how to do it. And I think that’s the most uncomfortable thing for Bob and I, because, what we look for is that mystical experience. And Bob looks for a sermon that really brings him closer to God and that inspires him to think throughout the week. And so we’re not looking for the... we’re not looking for that same arrangement that these other people are. We’re just gonna quietly go away and... yeah. So that’s been the tension with the congregations here.<sup>387</sup>

Her summary is vital as it points out the conflicts brewing in Hawaiian congregations. Elsewhere she spoke of the transient nature of mainlanders who have homes on Hawaii – how church services might be cutback or shrink during half the year. While there might be some budding Hispanic services, to her knowledge “there is no support of the farming community” either.<sup>388</sup> I

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<sup>387</sup> Hanna, interview.

<sup>388</sup> Hanna, interview.

reflect on what she is saying as we are conversing. “It seems like there’s kind of a thread of – ‘That’s the way we’ve always done it.’ - Whether it’s the church or the farmers or ...” I state. “Exactly. There’s only one way to cook a ham,” Louise responds.<sup>389</sup> But for Louise this is not true. She has embraced this season of her life. This land is sacred to her and even if the church is having issues of not meeting people where they are at, Louise and Bob have found their own rhythms of spiritual practice. She explains to me,

At this point in time we are Lutherans. And we’ve learned that we really are Lutherans. For Bob and I, we will often go to church in Volcano National Park, by ourselves, rather than going to town to the church. We kind of flow back and forth in those two realms. It turns out for us – Bob being really a very private person – that the reason that we will go to church is more mystical. The liturgy provides a mystical feed for us. And that same mystical feed exists in the nature. And, and for me at this point in time, it’s more strongly in the nature.<sup>390</sup>

Truly her affinity with her land shows in the partnerships and practices she has formed.

Her practice starts with her pace. She is deliberate, from watering trees one at a time to praying on the kneeling bench Bob made for her that overlooks the grounds and view down to the beach. “I need my kneeler – my quiet place to be still. Because I sometimes get too sidetracked by the movement,” she explains. She is grounded in God and experiencing in God in this place, as she describes,

that nature is, is the place where I experience God most. And that it has provided me the most comfort at the very worst times in my life. I remember the very worst thing that ever happened to me, the only thing I could do, the only thing I could think of to take away the pain and the feeling of just utter desolation was to lie down flat on the ground under a tree and hug the earth. And so I feel that I’m just a part of creation. And that’s a very profound feeling. It’s not that it’s my job to name everything and to have dominion over it. It is that I’m just a small part of creation. And that’s really part of my theology. And so the idea of going back to the garden, is something that brings me closer to God. More than anything else, really. And once you, it’s a good place to get your grounding.<sup>391</sup>

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<sup>389</sup> Hanna, interview.

<sup>390</sup> Hanna, interview.

<sup>391</sup> Hanna, interview.

I can sense this grounding as she discusses her intimate bond with the land: “I remember saying [to a friend], ‘everybody needs a special piece of land that they feel connected with. That is their connection to the earth.’ And, friend said, ‘do you have to own it?’ And I said, ‘No. No you don’t. It could be, it can be in a public forest. It can be in a park. It can be anywhere. But it’s important for us as children of the earth to be present there. To have that special place where we can go.’”<sup>392</sup> For Louise, this means being humbled by a butterfly or checking in on her seedlings. In these practices, she sees her faith as fundamental to farming.

“Not ‘fundamental-ist’, but fundamental,” she is quick to point out. She continues,

I’m in God’s country, and it feeds my faith. And it is the way in. It is the best way that I am connected to God. I marvel at his creation. All the time. And as I said to you the other day, it could be so boring, creation that is... You know. And it’s not. It’s not at all. It’s so magically whimsical and special that it points to a Creator. And I really like being in that space, because it keeps me spiritually grounded. And I... and it causes me to pray. And it causes me to speak to God. To give thanks. To offer praise. And to be humble in the face of it. So, it’s really fundamental to my faith life.<sup>393</sup>

And she does these things from her tai chi in the morning to walking the grounds.

“I try to, I walk on the land almost every day,” she tells me. “My friend Grace says, ‘you know what they say, ‘The best thing for a farm, is the farmer’s shadow.’ Love that phrase. Because you have to, you know you’re not going to know if something is going wrong with the trees unless you go around and visit them. So, I do that.”<sup>394</sup> Walking with her around the grounds on various days is proof of this. She sees what plants need help and does not ignore them. Again in her words, “You try to grow these plants and you find out, well, they have just a hard a time as humans do. And, I don’t like to interfere with them too much, but I really respect them and just

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<sup>392</sup> Hanna, interview.

<sup>393</sup> Hanna, interview.

<sup>394</sup> Hanna, interview.

the beauty. It just amazes me. The variety and the, it makes me humble. And I think that's a good thing. That brings me closer to God too. So, it is a very faith-based endeavor. It has been from the very beginning."<sup>395</sup> From the beginning, she also knows she and Bob cannot go back 200 years and undo the work of colonization and disease as well as the native Hawaiians rulers who, in her words "sold out" the native Hawaiians. But this work on the land is bringing people together and highlighting tensions in this work, as she illustrates,

And they [native Hawaiians] are one of the biggest proponents of what we want to do, which is perpetuate the native species. So, we do have contact with [native Hawaiians], and we try to be supportive with them, but that's a real tension in our lives – How do you make sure that they're taken care of as a native people and that other people are also taken care of. And mostly, it's that anger doesn't exist between us. That's the hardest thing to live with. You don't want to feel that there are two social groups that are really in high contention." Whether it is with native people groups, plants, or animals, the grounded faith Louise practices pulls her into cycles of acknowledging tension and working toward restoration. Louise starts to realize this too as we talk, "I see a thread there, recognize the plant – recognize the people... It's all part of creation, you know. And that's a very important thing."<sup>396</sup>

The recognition of creation and their faith is constant in their practices and in our conversations. Their acts of taking care of the land was just something that felt right. Louise explains,

We were convinced that that, just in our own hearts, that that's what we ought to be doing. we wanted more of the native plants to survive. To provide a habitat for the plants themselves. And we knew they needed help. That the other things that had been planted were -preventing them from reseeding themselves and from thriving. So, then we found the nurseries that grew them, and that was through NRCS [National Resources Conservation Service]. And we took a forest stewards class. And learned about how the Hawaiians had used the land, and started learning the Hawaiian names of the native plants. And it just, it just seemed like it was the right thing for us to do. And so we're trying to add as many different native plants as possible to make the bird habitat and provide bird food. And um, and we can, our love of that is like – and you keep hearing me say, "our", 'cause Bob is really in this together (laughter). And we both have the same

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<sup>395</sup> Hanna, interview.

<sup>396</sup> Hanna, interview.

goal. And so just to take care of the soil and take care of the natives - provide a place for those plants.<sup>397</sup>

I am able to take part in providing care for some of those plants when I am there. I spend part of one day trimming and pruning a poinsettia plant. Louise does not like to prune, but I find a rhythm and chop away at the plant. Both she and Bob let me know it is a hard job to mess up. I also participate in relocating *heliconia psittacorum*, plants which look like birds of paradise, from one area to another. As we are finishing Louise declares a new name for this area: Kristin's garden. I am moved to be part of their practice and land as both Bob and Louise have a deep affection for the place and plants around them. Here is a picture of that garden:



(Picture credit: Kristin Ritzau)

The plants and their names flow out of her mouth as easy as her children's names: Kopiko trees, Ohias, Moa ferns, Mamaki. She pulls out books for me to look through, and I am in awe of this woman's stamina and wisdom. As she says, and I make a note in my journal about

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<sup>397</sup> Hanna, interview.

it, farming is not retiring. She wishes she would have started farming sooner, but she keeps going driven by her adopted home to make the world a little bit better. She did not know anything about Hawaiian plants when she started, but now, she is a candidate for the National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) agro-forester of the year in their area (an award she eventually won along with two other farmers on the island).

NRCS is a strong partner in their work. They receive grants for planting trees, pruning coffee, and following the NRCS plans for planting and fertilizing. NRCS is the same organization working with the Springstroh Farm in Wisconsin on their conservation matters. They are a national arm of the USDA are dedicated to “helping people help the land.”<sup>398</sup> She also partners with Kona Coffee Farmers Association, even serving on the Membership Board for a number of years. However, the work ended up exhausting her. She found it was too much computer work and took her away from other passions like painting. But when she was involved, she was struck by how many women are involved in the Hawaiian coffee and farming industries. She tells me there are a lot women coffee farmers. Also, women compete and win the coffee-picking competitions. The people they deal with who work in the park are women as are the research scientists. In a later conversation, she wonders if having more women as pastors and farmers is because men are not finding those jobs as rewarding economically anymore. One cannot support a family on a pastor’s or farmer’s salary anymore. She questions if this movement means there is room for women to step into roles they have always wanted to do but have been blocked? But she is also quick to say she has no research to support this idea. It is an idea that catches my attention, but still, NRCS does not think there are enough younger women joining the

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<sup>398</sup> “People,” USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service website, accessed July 11, 2017. <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/people>.

farming ranks in Hawaii. Louise tells me, “It’s mostly us retired women who are the farmers. And I remember going in there [NRCS office] one day and Mary going, ‘So, how old are you?’ And I said, you know, it was probably something like, 66... And she said, ‘Augh!’ (sound of fist hitting table) ‘Darn!’”<sup>399</sup>

Despite the movements around women in coffee there is also a problematic history with coffee farming. Women were known as coffee brides. They married into coffee families and became married to the work unintentionally. One woman shared her story with Louise about seeing a woman hang herself from the processing roof of a coffee farm. The woman Louise chatted with got out of working in the fields, but still the image remains. Louise also tells me about the rumored coffee whores, too. She tells me, “Actual prostitutes that... gangs of prostitutes that come in when there’s a big coffee picking. That’s not gonna happen on this spot. It’s not, you know, first of all, they’re not gonna find this farm. The farm’s not big enough. You know, so... That happens on the really big farms. And I don’t even know if it’s just legend or not. Actually. I don’t know if it’s really true.”<sup>400</sup> She channels this rumor though by getting to know the women on her farm. She has known them for over a decade now. She has seen their children grow up and always welcomes them to use her facilities and resources.

Another vital group of partners are Louise and Bob’s neighbors. They share holidays and meals together. They also manage the same pest issues with the mongoose and pigs, so they are in conversation about control issues and their fences. In this area, people keep to themselves, but they appear to have found a rhythm of healthy relationships over the years.

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<sup>399</sup> Hanna, interview.

<sup>400</sup> Hanna, interview.

Despite the partnerships and belief in what she and Bob are doing, the tension lives on in the work. She tells me,

And I'm actually – it sometimes, it gives me angst – the things we do. What is it disturbing? What is it, you know like, this place could sit just the way it is, and what would happen? I don't know. There's no way of telling. I can tell you that bugs will eat a lot of leaves on my young trees. (laughter) I can tell you that. They can produce pretty good lace. But there's one kopiko tree down there that is - it has been eaten so many times and it's like, "No, I'm gonna try one more time!" The Kapiko trees are called the "praying hands tree" because that's the way their leaves come up. And then they spread out. So that's their nickname.<sup>401</sup>

The trees are candy to the pigs. She wants to protect these praying hands as much as she can. The only mammal indigenous to Hawaii is the bat. Every other animal was brought here by humans. The mongoose, cats, goats, sheep, and turkeys have to be excluded from the ecosystem to some extent because they are not native. She appreciates all of the creatures, but realizes, this work comes with a dose of realism. For instance, the fence helps keep out the pigs. They also must spray herbicide along the fence because growth around it will cause rust.

Still, their steadfast focus on improving the land and soil breeds gratefulness. Louise discusses this, "...we really don't feel like we own this land, it's just, we're just... it's a gift to us; it's on loan and we try to treat it that way. That we would try to steward this land so that, if anything, we could improve it, and take good care of it. And that's it's really just on loan from God. We're very grateful that we get to live here. We say prayers of thanks for that every day."<sup>402</sup> Her prayers come in many practices: painting trees, hugging trees, walking the grounds, using the prayer bench, processing food, hiking, being present to nature, really seeing people and animals, and of course farming and rehabilitating their acreage. I am struck by Louise's vision

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<sup>401</sup> Hanna, interview.

<sup>402</sup> Hanna, interview.



and actions of seeing those on the fringes and what they need for restoration. She provides homemade meals for me and gives away their excess fruit time and time again. She works on changing systems in her church and community. She takes care of her laborers in counter-capitalistic ways.

She is a healer of sorts, and I am struck by the thought of what if only more farmers were healers. She is able to see things other people do not. When we talk about inspiration for the farm name, she tells me a story of Martin Luther. “Luther is attributed with someone having asked him, ‘If you knew you were going to die tomorrow, what would you do today?’ and his answer was, ‘Plant a tree.’ And so, it’s that idea of hope. And that you’re only here temporarily - and hope for the future, hope for the continuance of life, and that it’s going to go on beyond you.”<sup>403</sup> Louise knows she will not see all of these trees grow into adults. But she has seen her hope grow.

The drive to the airport is beautiful. I keep gazing out at the view and back to Louise who is sharing more of her story. I write what she shared in my journal waiting at the airport gate:

The adoption, by law, was closed. She knew nothing about the baby boy – was he dead? In prison? What happened? Every January she went to a dark reflective place on his birthday. She was never in a space to think about searching. Then her pastor sent her a book: *Proof of Heaven*. The author talked about being adopted and looking for his birth mother. He never found her and always felt a hole. Louise had been at the farm for two years full-time at that point. She said she was in the right place to read that and considered contacting her son. She had survived breast cancer, busy years, raising children, a divorce – she said she felt safe enough now in her life of love with Bob and that was because of the healing she had experienced after a life of crises. Planting the trees had healed her – given her room to take this on. They and land gave her peace. She called Catholic Charities and after a month got a call back. They said Michael, her son, was anxious and excited to meet her. They had a conference call right away and shortly after flew to Florida to meet in person. Michael’s life hadn’t been easy either. He looked for Louise when he was 15, but the birth mother had to make contact too, not just the child, for the case to open. He is now 48 and as Louise describes him, she beams. She tells me he is in touch with his emotions, thoughtful, reflective, and talkative. In fact, they talk every week now. Michael came to visit Hawaii in January, just a few months before

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<sup>403</sup> Hanna, interview.

my visit. I can't help but think of the dark Januarys Louise spent and sunrise of this past one.<sup>404</sup>

Louise tells me you never know what will happen with children or how things will go. She gave up a lot, but what she has gained now – a sense of legacy, of hope, of finding God in our stories – to say I was moved is an understatement.

“Adoption also runs in my family history,” I explain when the time comes. “I’m not sure if I told you, but my middle name is Louise after my maternal grandmother. She was adopted from an orphanage.” I went on to tell her of the little bit of the story passed down to me. My biological great grandmother became pregnant out of wedlock in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Because this was extremely taboo, the family hid her and she gave birth in the barn. Her father was a veterinarian and he delivered the baby himself. Then he took her to the orphanage which was arranged by ethnic group. This is how my mother has always explained our Swedish heritage, because she was in a Swedish orphanage. I never had the chance to meet my grandmother. She died in open heart surgery in 1975 before my parents even met.

Louise responds to my story saying, “We all have this idea of the suburban life with tidy lawns, but the truth is, we all have our messy stuff. There’s always something else going on in our families.” I ask her with as humble of a tone as I possibly can if I can share this story? She says yes, followed by, “every time I tell my story now, I am letting go of shame. When I tell it, people are moved to tell me their own tales of adoption or family crisis.”<sup>405</sup> The stories weave together touching all involved, bringing restoration and hope from brokenness, brought together by hugging the earth and caring for the land – healed by planting where we are.

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<sup>404</sup> Author personal journal entry, April 8, 2016.

<sup>405</sup> Author personal journal entry, April 8, 2016.

The car continued to wind its way through Kona and toward the airport with Louise and I finding a bond that ran a little deeper before we left. I am left with a hug and affectionate words to “Keep in touch! You’re family now,” before checking in my bags. My ultimate themes and reflection on this farm are how spiritual formation and farming are hard work. They both gently (and sometimes not) confront you with deep wounds and hurt. But just like compost, something new and life-giving comes from the breakdown. Louise’s life and practices are a testament to embodied resurrection. She finds deeper meaning and faith in her daily rhythm; she shows up in droughts and pauses when matters are chaotic, often finding her way back to her scenic kneeling bench. She is not looking for ease and comfort, she is looking for ways to express gratitude and continue to help heal that which has been deemed irredeemable. She is doing the work of the church with her farm whether she is connected to a church body on a routine basis or not. She has experienced loss and found hope. She has been given much and gives back even more. She may have given a child up for adoption, but she has adopted a land, come alongside a culture, and nurtured such care back into a place in need of restoration. I can see this restoration in her and I can see it over her farm as my plane lifts off, carrying me back home, but connected to this place in a new way. That is what spiritual formation does – heals and connects us to a web in us and beyond us. I know I will never think of Hawaii the same again. Once my hands are in the soil, I am connected to new ways of understanding labor, healing, toil, and restoration. My prayer as I leave is for Louise’s legacy to continue and the roots of her trees will branch out just as her life has branched out to so many – including me.

Months later, I receive an email with a picture of the poinsettia I pruned: “Dear Kristin, I thought you would like to see how your pruning succeeded. Great job! From now on we will

always refer to this plant as Kristin's poinsettia. Aloha, Louise and Bob.”<sup>406</sup> The note gives me evidence that our relationship is still rooted in something deeper and trust was gained on my visit. Evidence also is found in that from pruning, comes growth – a lesson Louise knows well and one I will carry with me.

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<sup>406</sup> Louise Hanna, email message to author, June 13, 2016.

## Chapter 9

### Mustard Seed Farm, Ames, Iowa

I knew of Alice McGary before I met her. While doing a google search on faith-based farms in Iowa, I came across her farm's website ([mustardseedfarm.org](http://mustardseedfarm.org)). I lost myself in reading their blog and mission. Their beliefs page listed five core elements: Service to our community, Land stewardship, Hospitality, Nonviolence, and Sustainability. They list imperatives under these headings such as:

- Growing food for those in need.
- No harmful petrol-derived pesticides, herbicide, or fertilizers.
- Spiritually open and nurturing.
- Respect the dignity of all beings.
- Decrease our dependence on fossil fuels.<sup>407</sup>

The blog backs up these statements with stories and pictures of Mustard Seed Farm. When I went to the Women, Food, and Agriculture Network conference in the fall of 2015 we ended up in a few of the same sessions, and I began to know Alice as the one who asked bold questions. I finally spoke with her at a meal explaining my research, and she invited me to the farm the following spring.

This is my last farm visit. I arrive as a new group is training on how to pack CSA boxes. It is the beginning of the farming season in Iowa. Winter is over and things like asparagus, sorrel, and garlic are ready for harvesting. Seeds planted in early spring are sprouting. The rhubarb is vibrant with its pink stalks and elephant ear like leaves. I desperately want to pack some to take back home, but I know they would not make it. Just as I am taking in my surroundings, I am

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<sup>407</sup> "Our Mission and Beliefs," Mustardseedfarm.org website, accessed June 21, 2017. <http://www.mustardseedfarm.org/?q=about>.

thrust into working right away alongside the other volunteers. Onion harvesting is first. I make notes of how joyful and excited the volunteers are to get dirty and dive into the work.

Alice is in her element. She is caught up in the energy of a new season, of working with new volunteers, and, what I would find out is a common issue, never enough time or hands to get everything done. I do not see her complain, though she assures me later she does and her teammates could vouch for her. However, she always rolls with what each day brings. The system she and others founded starts to come into focus as those who harvest can take boxes home, leaving the other produce to be distributed to food banks and those in the area in need of fresh produce.

Giving away two thirds of what they grow is paramount to their work being a Catholic Worker Farm. When Alice, Nicholas Leete, and Chris Corbin founded Mustard Seed Farm, their vision and passion was to follow this model of giving away more than they profited. Even though, personally, Alice has not always been associated with the Catholic Worker movement and events, she still found herself trying to live by the Catholic Worker ideals. These ideals led her and the other founding members to the core values of the farm which include voluntary simplicity, social justice, and a spiritually integrative way of being in the world. Indeed, that is what the Catholic Worker movement is based on as inspired by the Catholic social teachings. Alice describes the movement to me in that every Catholic Worker house is autonomous, but guided by founding values and principles. She and her first partners agreed to the principles of this movement, desiring to affiliate themselves with the Catholic Workers, but also wanting to work with all belief systems and be open about their experiences.

For Alice and the other founders, this openness meant dedicating herself to alternative economic and labor structures. Alice and her friends, Colette and Ellen, built the farm slowly,

living next door to the farm for the first six months when they were renting one acre for \$200 the first year. Renting land for the farm was difficult at first. Farmers are reluctant to rent part of their acreage because if one acre of someone's two hundred acres of corn is dedicated to a rotating vegetable crop, it will affect their subsidies. After living next door to their land, Alice and Colette moved onto the land in a RV they purchased. The following year the team took out a five-year lease on two acres. But Chris and Ellen went on to marry (not each other), leaving Alice, Colette, and Nicholas to manage the farm. Colette was part of Mustard Seed for two years and Nicholas for six after that point. During this time came the building of a small house and a ten-year lease on three acres. Two years before the house was built Nate, Alice's husband, began supporting the farm and moved there as well. In 2014, they purchased eleven acres of this property and now Alice and Nate are the main caretakers. In the end, it made more sense to buy the property for a long-term investment. That way, they could manage their own structures and perennial crops. The financial structure is interesting and one that is deeply tied to the Catholic Worker movement. Alice tells me almost every year they have been able to cover the farms expenses with their CSA member shares. Intriguingly, these shares are only one-third of the food they grow though. As mentioned, the other two-thirds are given away to work-share participants, families in need, or food pantries and shelters. This model is still intact today.

Additionally, Alice works at the co-op in town too and is connected to her community, inviting them to the farm for events. She also teaches classes on the Catholic Worker ideals and is in a band. It is neat to see these things come together one day during my visit when an infectious disease doctor comes with his family to volunteer on the farm. I overhear a conversation about a new need in the community. Because of Obamacare people who have HIV are now able to receive their treatment closer to home, not having to commute to Des Moines for

their appointments. Alice and the doctor start talking about a farm-to-clinic vegetable program because he would love his patients to have access to fresh vegetables. Alice is open to the idea immediately. I do not know if the idea came to fruition, but what strikes me is that this is not just an organic farm in the soil, but it is organic in the way Alice interacts with people as well. In my recorded notes from the day I recall this realization, “You can tell not only is the farm organic but there is this organic fluidity with the community with what pops up.”<sup>408</sup> Alice wants to make this partnership work; most of all she wants to make her farm work but that comes with tension.

Before exploring that tension, Alice talks to me about where her passion for this work comes from. Her mother always tried to have a garden in Chicago and did have a successful plot in Milwaukee for a few years, but faced roadblocks. The gardens were destroyed by landlords or the city. Seeing this only fed Alice’s desire to garden. She did not relate to other children who felt like farming and gardening were strenuous. She explained to me,

A lot of people talk about growing up on farms, or growing up with it being this really terrible chore. I grew up the opposite. I grew up with someone who loved to garden, longing to garden and struggling. It was sort-of this privilege. [I would think] “aren’t you lucky if you’re able to have a garden?” Watching my mom have heartbreak after heartbreak of trying to have a garden and having it just destroyed. Or trying to plant flowers in the space between the alley gravel and the cemetery wall and they’re all dying because it’s terrible soil.<sup>409</sup>

Despite this, her mother would bring flowers she found into the apartment feeding Alice’s love for nature. Alice told me, “As a kid in the city, I was a kid who always wanted to be in the wild. I spent a lot of time in the cemetery and in the park – like at the lake – and I was always trying to find wilderness.”<sup>410</sup> What she found was farming.

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<sup>408</sup> Personal recording by author, May 15, 2016.

<sup>409</sup> Alice McGary, interview by author, May 13, 2016.

<sup>410</sup> McGary, interview.



Alice worked on farms and visited them before starting her own. Her vision came to actualization when one of the farmers on a different Catholic Worker farm asked her “Well, what are you waiting for?” She describes her response to me, saying she told him “‘I don’t know. I guess maybe I should just do this.’ I guess I felt really strongly that it was the right thing for me to do. And I thought, well if I have faith, I should believe it’s just gonna work out. I don’t need to be so fearful or cautious, I should just do it.”<sup>411</sup> For her, this was stepping into the freedom to choose – something we spend a handful of our time talking about. She desires for people to live in freedom, but what she speaks of is not a patriotic sense of pursuing the American Dream. Rather, her sense of freedom derives directly from liberation theology and the Catholic Workers’ movement.

The freedom she is working towards is based more in distributive economics, in seeking to work hard and not being tied down or burdened by a larger-than-life system. Alice describes it this way,

I guess it’s sort-of distributive economics. They [Catholic Worker Movement] believe in really small-scale, personal ownership, or private-ownership. They believe in pretty much the same thing that the Catholic church teaches in all of its social teaching. They’re not against private property, but they’re not Capitalists; but they’re not Communists. We believe in private property, but the point of work and the point of production is usefulness and the greater good. People should have ownership in their means of production, and this is a model of smaller-scale crafts and food-growing that is all about service to the neighbor and to the community, and beauty and helpfulness and not about greed and competition.<sup>412</sup>

The question looms in my mind, what if we were just allowed to help people without so many strings attached? I think that is what she is getting at during our time together. Why is it so hard to just want to turn away from fear and choose freedom?

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<sup>411</sup> McGary, interview.

<sup>412</sup> McGary, interview.

Alice's vision is to be in relationship with people in order to provide spaces so we all can help each other move towards our dreams. "We all have more choices than we realize," she tells me on our last day together.<sup>413</sup> But getting back to the question of moving away from fear and into freedom – no one feels this tension more than Alice. She explains to me,

I have a problem farming. I have a hard time farming because farming is really hard. And a really diversified system is really hard. Then we dreamed, not all by ourselves, but this crazy alternative economics and this crazy alternative food system and we're just trying to do things in all these ways that are not the way our cultures works. Then we want to have all these volunteers participating with us, and we want to have this be a community thing. But, it's not how anyone – or hardly anyone – was raised. It's against the grain all the time. I'm not good at it. I'm dealing with all these people that are just... it's just foreign. Everything we're trying to do is foreign on all these unconscious levels. And so sometimes I think it's ridiculous. It's just exhausting to try to work so against the grain.<sup>414</sup>

I sense her exhaustion as she is training a new puppy, starting a new farm season, and faced with the growing real-costs of repairs like broken roofs and worn buildings. Still she and her spouse, Nate, roll with it.

Despite the tension, she believes in the work. There is clarity in it for her as she explains to me, "I feel like this is my calling. Not as in, 'God told me to do this.' But it feels really right. It feels like maybe this confidence in my faith and that I'm trying to take right actions in the world; I'm trying to be as good as I can be – again not in that in that sort-of like, 'I want to be good and holy...' but I just, I do. I want to be good and holy. I don't want to be thought of as good and holy. I just want to be good and holy."<sup>415</sup> She knows the work is not easy, but it feels right. And as we tour the farm and the property, I can sense the "rightness" of this place. The actual land they own is eleven acres. Two to three acres are dedicated to vegetables, five plus to

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<sup>413</sup> Personal recording by author, May 15, 2016.

<sup>414</sup> McGary, interview.

<sup>415</sup> McGary, interview.

prairie, then there are the structures including a greenhouse, workshed, garage, barn, and house. The rest of the property is made up of a pond they built themselves surrounded by fruit trees and berry bushes. We also walk through the neighboring property where Alice shows me the creek and landscape. I can tell she loves this place from her words, but also from our tour. She talks about the glacial receding that left behind beautiful soil in Iowa. It is one of the reasons Iowa is mostly crops; the soil is rich and generous, full of spongy organic matter and a gorgeous black color. Iowa has the least amount of habitat of any state because growing food here is so easy. But Alice is drawn to more here: the sky, the hills, the rocks. She admires the sunrises and sunsets and the interesting weather.

The routine changes each season with May to October being their busiest time. They share their life with people daily. Some of these people are interns on the farm team who stay for the summer or all the way to October. Others are seasonal volunteers who commit to various days of the week or helping when a volunteer cannot come. They harvest twice a week in this summer season and then on the other days they are doing various tasks of weeding, planting, and looking after the animals. There are repairs and projects as well as events to plan such as the weekly potlucks. Each day presents its own adventure as Alice explains to me that the farm team meets every morning and everyone gets say in what they personally need from the day as well as what they see that the farm needs. From there, what is most urgent is done first and the tasks are divvied up amongst the workers for the day. The winters are different. Cover crops go into the ground, and the electric fence comes down so deer can roam and eat more freely. There are events, but they slow down. The potluck only happens once a month instead of weekly. And Alice finds herself working more hours in town at the co-op.

She did not always picture herself staying in Iowa. Her tenancy came in increments – six months, then a year, then another year. She tells me, “I was kind of staying longer and longer. And that spoke to me, I guess, needing to be in a place, and really getting to know that place.”<sup>416</sup> Her affinity for farming and place continued to grow as she read Wendell Berry and formed more partnerships in her time here. She speaks highly of her partnership with Practical Farmers of Iowa. She helps them run on-farm research on small-scale sustainable farms. The results are openly shared instead of being closed off like other research. Pesticide Action Network is another group she partners with and believes in their work. She appreciates their agenda and thinks it is reasonable to fight for transparency. What they are asking for are items such as what farmers choose to spray on their crops being on public record. She describes this further, “Yeah, that we know what’s being sprayed and we know what the actual harm is. Whether that means we have real unbiased scientists doing research on these things...But, I feel like we kind of know they are poisons. They are killing things. They’re meant to kill things. It seems outrageous to think that if you chemically kill something that that’s just going to be over. I mean, if you physically kill something that has repercussions.”<sup>417</sup> Although these partnerships are strong, interestingly enough, the church is not a large partner in her work, and this comes up as we talk about pesticide use.

She tells me,

Every church group should be able to say, “That [spraying pesticides] doesn’t seem right... I don’t think that was God’s plan for our stewardship of creation.” I feel like all these sixty-year-old farm-men, if they were really looking at that would ask, “Does this give me joy? Is this what I love about my life as a farmer? Is this how I want to steward

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<sup>416</sup> McGary, interview.

<sup>417</sup> McGary, interview.

God's creation?" Would they go talk to their pastors and say, "I feel so good about all the pesticides I use." I just don't know what it would take for people to be able to say that.<sup>418</sup>

But she understands the multilayered-ness of the conversation too. She tells me she knows farmers are good people who, at the end of the day, are concerned about their kids' education or wanting their families to be comfortable. She desires her own parish to be more involved too. Helping grow vegetables for people in need is something that is very accessible, Alice explains to me. She appreciates concepts like charity and the pope's encyclical, but also wants to see action. And here is her farm providing a way to help. She details the lack-of partnership on her and the parish's part in our interview, explaining parish members,

rarely come to any of our public events, or our discussions, or to our work days. And part of it is, maybe I'm not on top of it enough to get things in the bulletin on time. But even when things are in there, we have big events and nobody from my church comes. And they all know me, and yeah... It's a little puzzling. But I've spoken to a couple of the education classes such as the religious education classes. I would love it if some of the younger folks came out here and did like a work day or an overnight, I feel like that would be really fun. Maybe a camp out and sing some songs and go take some food to the food pantry and then talk about and read about Jesus.<sup>419</sup>

From pesticides to partnerships, the issues are not black and white. Relationships take work. Alice knows this and also knows she is only one person. There will always be more to understand and work on together when it comes to church workdays or her neighbors use of pesticides. An example of this is later when we are on our tour of her acreage, she admits it is weird though because her farm is right next to corn fields and is thriving so she still wonders what the sprays and chemicals do to the ground? The church is growing too, remodeling their

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<sup>418</sup> McGary, interview.

<sup>419</sup> McGary, interview.

current building to be more friendly to a more diverse group of people. There are conundrums and complexities all around.

The day I arrive I experience the pesticide issue firsthand. As we are harvesting onions, we can see the tractor and spray rolling through the fields. Alice ushers those of us who should not be outside into the work shed. She tells us she did not know they were spraying today and that we should probably stay inside for a half-hour or so. Herein lies one of the problems of neighbors not communicating or even the large companies who spray pesticides not telling the farmer when they are coming to the field. The larger the farm, the more automated and autonomous it becomes.

Mustard Seed Farm is the opposite of autonomous though. Through their CSA they have a web of relationships with their volunteers and members. They have paying members, working members, substitute workers, volunteer days, and farm-team members who commit to the farm for various timeframes. The farm team operates on committees they are passionate about such as being part of the animal committee, the gardening committee, or the event planning committee to name a few. They operate decision-making-by-consensus with no one person having centralized power. But it is clear that Alice's vision and passion continue to shape the work and place:

What I would love to do is open everyone's minds to the fact that they don't have to work for rewards. They can work for goals such as the reward of good work and of seeing a job well done and knowing that the job is important. They don't have to have a boss, and they don't have to have a lower person. We can be equals. We could be creative... What if it wasn't true that you had to - for the rest of your life - work at some job that you don't love in order to make a lot of money so that someday you'll be happy? [laughter]... and secure!<sup>420</sup>

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<sup>420</sup> McGary, interview.

Overcoming this fear and anxiety is key in her vocation to step into the freedom of something new.

However, no one feels this tension more than her. She questions, “But am I happy? Am I a good example? Like... ‘Look at me, I’m so happy...’ [laughter]... But no! I’m kind of stressed out and I’m trying to run this crazy farm where everything’s broken and my workers don’t show up. And I never know what’s gonna happen. So... There ya go...”<sup>421</sup> It is clear she is still working out what this looks like, but her wrestling strikes me as spiritual discipline. What I mean is, the conversations we have over the course of my visit about choosing to do this work, about the freedom of choice and working towards goals and not rewards or compensation are counter-cultural. Her struggle strikes me as trying to do this work and choose this life in a larger system that will never support her. It is a discipline to show up every day and check on the tomato plants, to train her dog, to plant a prairie. Not that planting corn or soy is easy, but because of automation and monocultures, one crop farms are easier in a lot of ways.

I, too, am struck by the hard work when I am there. One of the tasks I am given is to chop down old okra plants and leftover sunflower stalks. The okra now look like dried out little trees. They are difficult to snap and bend. At first Alice does not know where to put them all, but then she spies a trench dug by high school students earlier in the year. I note that Alice gathered up “more sticks than her body” in my notes and grows excited as she deposits them in the little gully. The plants will not inhibit water flow and will break down, returning to the earth, she explains to me. She departs for another chore and I am there, six months pregnant, belly protruding, chopping okra with my feet and hands. Overall, I note later, it felt good to move my

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<sup>421</sup> McGary, interview.

body, but I am tired. At a certain point, when I am carrying load after load of sticks, I want to leave. But I take a second to check myself. “This is the work,” I reflect in my journal. “It has to get done right now.”<sup>422</sup> This is the spiritual discipline of showing up. I see Alice tilling the field, checking on the dog, weeding, and I channel her example of faithfulness. It strikes me as I drive away from the farm on my last day watching her “put one foot in front of the other; one field in front of the other; one seed down at a time.”<sup>423</sup> She tells me at a certain point,

We have really struggled with any kind of consistent spiritual practice on our farm. Which makes me sad, but which doesn't make other people sad. We are this spiritually-based farm that is super open and wants people of all faiths, or of none, to be welcome and included here, and I would like to – within that framework – to still have some spiritual practice. It is hard to find something that everybody loves.

But in my short time, I have seen spiritual practice in the way Alice keeps showing up to her land and vocation each day. By acknowledging her fear and anxiety in doing this work, she is not bottling it up and giving it more power. She keeps doing the work at hand, trying as best she can to find a way to freedom – choosing freedom from an oppressive system as she goes.

As much as she wants to give farm leadership a horizontal lens, she sets a tone, and I can tell I am not the only one walking away with a positive influence. Take this reflection from a summer intern as he left the farm just a few months after my visit:

I've found that the prairie invokes something deeper. My work at mustard seed (attacking invasive species, establishing prairie strips, and studying the landscape) has made me think about an intrinsic and ethical requirement for the stewardship our land. Iowa has the most habitat loss of any state in America. As I write this in a shuttle moving away from Ames, each stalk of corn weighed down by its tassel like a worshiper kneeling in a church pew seems like a bold statement in favor of a better way of living. Mustard Seed's prairies, gardens, and land are a testament to intensive food production that is neither profit oriented nor environmentally draining. Every evening the prairie grows

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<sup>422</sup> Author personal journal entry, May 16, 2017.

<sup>423</sup> Personal recording by author, May 15, 2016.



luminescent, each of its members straining to grasp the last of the sun. Each plant holds its own niche, unique and irreplaceable. It is at mustard seed I have begun to find mine.<sup>424</sup>

I know he has been part of certain practices during his summer there. The interns sleep in an outside loft above the outdoor kitchen. They are immersed in what it looks like to live a life of simplicity. They give away more food than sell food that brings in profit. They see how ownership of a place in deed (and indeed) can be for the greater good, not for greed and competition. As this intern mentions in his own way, working against the grain through this diversified system and distributive economics works. He has found his freedom.

Alice notes that working against the grain is hard. She questions if the work is worth it. I wonder if interviewing her at the end of the season, would her answers be the same? But as I look over her interview, she describes the farm and Iowa as beautiful fourteen times. The ecosystem is tied to her and to the work. She explains the attention they give to the ecosystem in the example of the restoration they are doing on one side of the property:

We just put in a pond last year which is pretty exciting on a lot of fronts. We put in this pond, and we're trying to do this savanna habitat restoration. Savanna in that it models a kind of eco-like agro-forestry environment. We're planting things – a lot of native edible trees, or native crosses with more improved strains. We've planted some pawpaws, persimmons, chestnuts, and hickory, and some white oak, and some smaller shrub.<sup>425</sup>

The vision, she tells me, is to couple the restoration with a productive food system replicating the savannas of old. The pond is a central feature as it provides a back-up water supply and something she and Nate are passionate about. They want to capture the water from their land and make sure it is clean as it leaves their land. Nate's testing of the water proves this is happening so far. They dream of adding fish to the pond and swimming in it too.

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<sup>424</sup> Ethan Evans, "Luminescent Prairie," Mustard Seed Farm Blog, August, 6, 2016, accessed June 27, 2017. <http://www.mustardseedfarm.org/?q=node/291>.

<sup>425</sup> McGary, interview.

The ecosystem they are restoring is about the land and the symbiotic relationship this web feeds into overall. But their dreams are bigger than just an ecosystem. Alice tells me,

One thing I love about gardening is – I love being outside. I love working outside. And I love life. I love working with life. I like taking care of life – I mean, I realize I do a lot of killing of things – as a gardener. But food is cool, and eating is alright, and I like that the things that we’re growing are food. It’s really good food and it’s a gift of love to all these people – some of whom we know, and some of whom we’ll never know. And they’ll never know that we care about them – but it’s like this packet of ecosystem and life and health, and that’s amazing.<sup>426</sup>

It is here that her connection with work, people, God, and the environment takes shape. She continues,

For a lot of people it’s the harvest they really love, or it’s the cooking and eating; and I like that that’s all part of our life on the farm, but I like caring for the plants. I like taking care of that life. It’s this weird balance of trying to care for biology and ecosystem while struggling against it in this weird [way]... making these rows, and this control, and this neatness. Yet, trying not to destroy this wonderful web of soil. And trying to have this huge amount of biodiversity in the things we plant and in the things that we want to let be. But then, just considering well we have rabbit habitat everywhere and how do we keep the rabbits from eating everything? I don’t know.

She dives into these tensions often – something she describes as an intersection of digging deeper into “such a rich terrain of [the] theological, political, and economic... It’s about dignity, and equality, and you know, we all need things from each other and we all have things to give.”<sup>427</sup> In exploring this dignity and equality of restoration and relationship, some of our richest conversation emerges about life and death.

She tells me they are slow to introduce animals on the farm “‘Cause I think it’s just a huge responsibility, and I think everything is life and death on the farm. I feel like an animal is a bigger responsibility than a tree. You could neglect a tree for a whole year and it would probably

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<sup>426</sup> McGary, interview.

<sup>427</sup> McGary, interview.

be fine.”<sup>428</sup> We explore the dynamics of killing and its role on a farm. Coyotes used to run through property fairly easily and the bunnies were under control because of the natural predatory relationship. Now with fencing, the bunnies are more prevalent. The deer come and go. She tells me they need to start hunting, but the idea, while she is not morally opposed, does not excite her. The one time she watched a farm team member kill a sick chicken she ended up feeling quite queasy. She wanted to learn though, but feels the tension,

If I’m gonna kill things... I mean, clearly it would be a good thing to be able to do. In theory, I could lovingly, respectfully kill something – but I don’t know, it’s hard. I mean, I’m a pacifist, I’m an anarchist. I don’t believe in domination of any kind or violence of any kind. But it’s okay if I kill an animal... maybe that doesn’t make any sense. But... I do like to eat meat. I don’t know. I feel like, in theory it’s alright for me to hunt things and eat them.<sup>429</sup>

The theory meets reality when she talks about the way they kill bugs. She explains it is easier for her to pick bugs off of plants and put them in a container to either throw them in the lake or feed them to the chickens rather than squishing them with her fingers. They do not kill a lot of bugs, but there is this truth to confront that eating involves killing – killing animals and plants – if one wants to eat.

There is hope brewing with the new dog, hope that he will scare some of the deer and bunnies away. The electric and regular fences help, but the deer and bunnies still can access about a third of what grows on the farm in the summer. I acknowledge as we talk there is no right or wrong answer to these questions. These are the realities of farming where she is, and it resonates with what every other farmer has told me about their property. No one is farming for

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<sup>428</sup> McGary, interview.

<sup>429</sup> McGary, interview.

perfection. The farmers show up to their land and animals every day, taking care of life and death around them. Alice sums this up beautifully:

Take a little seed. Seeds are just amazing. I just think, every moment, every thing – like in every space and every moment there’s so many amazing, miraculous things. Whether it’s beauty, or whether it’s kindness, or whether it’s life... and in that same moment there are so many terrible, horrible, heart-breaking things. And I want to just be able to be in a space where I can acknowledge how horrible things are sometimes and yet still be present with how wonderful things are.<sup>430</sup>

And fortunately, I get a glimpse at how Alice holds both the beauty and the heartache. Even though she tells me spiritual practice is hard, there is one practice she adopted from a mentor of hers which is implemented daily. It is a gardener’s take on the Ignatian Examen called “Roses, Buds, and Thorns.” Usually at lunchtime whoever is on the farm that day reflects on what gives them joy, what is causing pain, and what brings them hope – a rose, a thorn, and a bud. It is a take on consolations and desolations. Alice tells me more about it explaining,

What I like about it is it’s an opportunity for people to become closer to each other and it’s an opportunity to self-reflect about what it is that gives me joy, and what it is that’s hard for me. It’s a slow and patient spiritual exercise in that it let’s [people] just notice everyday. Or, for me, let’s just see if I can notice, all the time, in theory, what is giving me joy? What is painning me? And to listen to that. If it gives me joy – is it a real joy? Or is it just a momentary satisfaction? And if it is a pain – is it a real, like, heart-soreness? Is it bitter-sweet? Did I just not get what I wanted, or am I really sad? Is it sad for the world? And what does that mean? How can I use that information to change how I live in the world? Whether that’s to follow my joy, and follow the things that give me life; or to be like, “Wow – this is something that gives me pain, day after day, and my heart is aching about this so much, Should I be making it more of a priority in my decisions?”<sup>431</sup>

I get the opportunity to practice this version of the examen with the group of volunteers on the first day. I could certainly see how pausing together each day to reflect on these areas would bring people closer together. It gives glimpses into what is going on inside and how the spiritual

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<sup>430</sup> McGary, interview.

<sup>431</sup> McGary, interview.

meets every day chores and rituals. It invites the challenges Alice invokes, too, in her explanation. What brings joy, pain, and hope are important to reflect on and, from there, move forward towards reconciliation.

I also see the efforts Alice puts into The Catholic Worker zines (smaller version of a magazine). They feature hand drawings, articles by her and other farmers, and original poetry. She dedicates each issue to a common theme and other Catholic Worker farms are invited to write and read the newsletter. As I look through the stack she gives me, I see issues on stewardship, education, women in farming, technology, and features on certain farms, including Mustard Seed. The words are meaningful and the nature of so much of them being handwritten speaks to an intentionality that does not exist in a lot of spaces these days which are mostly driven by technology.

I am struck by the community that comes together in these issues. An article by a person named Ethan from the Possibility Alliance in 2009 stands out to me. It is there he gives a top 10 list of how gardening helps usher in nonviolence into the world. The list includes such things as self-reliance in growing one's own food and health and healing from being so close to your food supply. There is another point catching my eye too: Bread Labor. He writes, "Bread labor is doing work for your food, clothing, shelter, and other basic needs with your own hands so the burden does not fall to others."<sup>432</sup> I stop to consider how many of my basic needs are left up to others to create and fix? My clothes, my food, my house, even my healthcare to some extent are on my list. I can pray for these people or I can choose to partner with them as Alice does every week.

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<sup>432</sup> Ethan, "What Better Place?," *Catholic Worker Farmer*, Fall 2009, 9.

There are also charts in an issue from 2012 detailing the thousands of pounds of produce they have distributed. It is inspiring to see the amount given away grow from over 5,000 to 8,000 in the span of three farming seasons.<sup>433</sup> Despite the hard times the farm has faced, so many mouths are being and have been fed by Alice and the team at Mustard Seed. I would also say, minds have probably been changed and transformed by this work as well. Mine has. Dedicating one's self to such a life of farming and craft is not one many choose these days, yet the farm continues to make ends meet each year and keep going.

I keep going at the pace I am capable of during my days there. I water carrots, chop down okra, and plant seeds with the hope they will blossom into friendly herbs for bees. Alice and I gather for one last meal together after this work. We make omelets made with fresh herbs, onions, and eggs from the farm. We cook in the outdoor kitchen overlooking the fields. Alice tells me this will be the first meal of the season cooked outside. I chop the onions and fresh sorrel after rinsing the dirt off. I can think of no meal I have had that is this true to farm-to-table.

As we sit down and decide to sing the doxology for our prayer, I am in awe of my time spent in Iowa, but also in Wisconsin, Hawaii, and California. Briefly, I gratefully reflect on these places as we sing. *Praise God from whom all blessings flow.* I think of watering carrots, of the water flowing into the pond in Ames, of the people this farm touches. I think of watering my tomato plants at home and of the rain I saw pour in Hawaii. *Praise God all creature here below.* I look at the new puppy at our feet and at my expanding belly; I think of the creatures who make up this ecosystem and the webs of life in this project. *Praise God above ye heavenly host.* I think of the Spirit and how It infuses these places and sits in the joy and heartache. I think of the sky in

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<sup>433</sup> Nicholas Leete, "Mustard Seed Community Farm Harvest and Distribution," *Catholic Worker Farmer*, Fall/Winter 2012, 11.

Iowa and how much Alice loves it. *Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*. I ponder the traditions here, both new and old, and the way God is outside of time and in all relationships, starting with the Trinity. The Trinity is infinite – both simple and complex – as is the idea of freedom Alice is pursuing. It seems natural to pursue freedom and follow one’s dreams of sharing and giving, especially to those in need. It is modest and humble, but also operating in a system that makes it complex and complicated. *Amen*. I am overwhelmed with gratitude.

We pray this doxology and we eat. We eat the food brought forth from the earth around us. Food that will die and bring forth new life. Because the resurrection is both simple and complex too. It requires death; it requires a miracle. Yet in this tension, it works; resurrection works and Alice sees it daily:

I just feel like seeds are such this obvious little miracle. They’re just this speck of dirt or something. They’re just like this little pellet of deadness. I know it’s just such a typical metaphor, but they’re just so amazing. It’s this thing that can be sitting inert for years and years, and then at the right moment, it just turns into this new life. It’s just so small, and again, it’s like the name of our farm. I’m being so cliché, but I just feel like every seed is just a miracle.<sup>434</sup>

I drive away from the farm knowing I beheld the miracle of choosing freedom too. Freedom is hard work; spiritual discipline is hard work. Yet, Alice is showing up to this beautiful place and continuing to wrestle the deeper meaning out of this transformational way of life. She has faith like a mustard seed, and I am honored to have witnessed a way of life which exemplifies this truth.

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<sup>434</sup> McGary, interview.

### PART III

#### ROOTS: A Model and Action Plan



## Chapter 10

### New Roots: An Emerging Model of Agricultural Spirituality

Whether we are looking at stories from last year or one hundred years ago, women's stories matter. Yet, birth stories, healing stories, work stories, and witness accounts are still treated as second class. The stories of theology and agriculture are changing, but there continues to be a struggle for these accounts to be recognized as main narratives.<sup>435</sup> In so many ways, these stories are seeds. Some are sprouting, growing, thriving; others are waiting dormant for the right time to emerge; still others have bloomed brightly and are beginning their journey to seed back into the earth. It is the process of life, death, and resurrection. This process is found in what I am defining in chapter ten called *agricultural spirituality*. Agricultural spirituality names a process which merges the main points from chapters one through three alongside the embodied work of relationships, place, and God in the featured narratives of the farmers in this dissertation.

I do not intend to create a theory, but rather, by examining the threads in the research, a model of agricultural spirituality emerges which has not been defined in theology and agricultural research to-date. In this chapter I will explain the few authors who discuss agricultural spirituality in minor ways to highlight the need for a more dynamic model and definition. Then, I will illustrate the model and elaborate on the themes and codes which led to the model, as well as which ideas from part one are carried over into this final discussion.

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<sup>435</sup> It should be noted, this dissertation is being written during the “#metoo” phenomenon where, for once, certain women's' stories about sexual abuse and misconduct are being taken seriously in wider culture. What will unfold from CEO firings and prosecutions remains unknown, but perhaps now women's stories are exactly what are needed in many areas of life and culture.

### Past Discussion of Agricultural Spirituality

The need to develop an understanding of agricultural spirituality existed long before I did my research. However, it has not been called agricultural spirituality outright. Four authors attempt some exploration of spiritualizing agricultural, but in drastically different ways. The work of Rudolf Steiner, Gary Fick, John E. Carroll, and Fred Kirschenmann will briefly be reviewed here before moving on to exploring my definition and model of agricultural spirituality. Rudolf Steiner called his version “spiritual science” in the 1920s. In response to the industrialization of agriculture in his day, he invented biodynamic agriculture as part of this idea of spiritual science.

His biodynamic method consists of nine preparations. The first two entail packing a cow horn with manure in the winter and silica in the spring and burying it in the soil according to the lunar cycle. The other preparations include stuffing the intestines and bladders of deceased animals which are then buried as well.<sup>436</sup> Steiner’s intention is to reconnect food and spirituality in nourishing ways. He claims the cow horn is a tool of astrality which channels cosmic energy and life.<sup>437</sup> Hugh Courtney summarizes Steiner’s belief this way, “Each of these preparations has an affinity for making smooth the way for Christ’s descent and, ultimately, his ascent. When they are used a vortexial energy channel is created, which allows the cosmic energies to penetrate the care of the Earth from the outermost periphery of the cosmos.”<sup>438</sup> While I appreciate connecting the cosmos to agriculture, the critique of biodynamics is worth noting. No study has been

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<sup>436</sup> Rudolf Steiner, *What is Biodynamics? A Way to Heal and Revitalize the Earth* (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 1993), 5.

<sup>437</sup> Steiner, *What is Biodynamics?*, 116.

<sup>438</sup> Hugh Courtney, introduction, to *What is Biodynamics? A Way to Heal and Revitalize the Earth*, by Rudolf Steiner (Great Barrington, MA: SteinerBooks, 2005), 39.

conducted of biodynamic agriculture by itself because most people who practice biodynamics, practice organic farming as well.<sup>439</sup> It remains unknown if the preparations or the organic methods cause healthy results. To-date it is not proven as a method that scientifically works.

Now, this is Steiner's point: he wants humans to be spiritually connected to their food by leaving scientific reasoning and measuring productivity out of the conversation. His desire is to connect the particular to the cosmos and wants more than measurements of productivity and science as a means of connecting to the earth.<sup>440</sup> Thus, even he would not favor researching biodynamics by measuring outcomes. Further, Steiner is a philosopher and his primary interests and research are not in agriculture, so this complicates his case.

While I agree with needing to examine agriculture as more than a means of production and science, I am skeptical of divorcing science in such a large way that Steiner does. Indeed, he comes back to many organic methods in his conversations with science, so it appears unclear what benefits the preparations have in farming. Pseudoscience associated with spirituality can enter into tricky territory. Farmers understand the soil and what happens in a place because of their relationship and practices. If one wants to practice biodynamics, they are not hurting any humans, but all factors must be weighed with biodynamics in terms of soil content, green manure, and organic methods too. When one is disconnected from the soil and practice of farming, there is loss, but the spiritual path and nourishment can come in more ways than Steiner presents. Certainly, the farmers in this dissertation are also making connections to Christ despite

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<sup>439</sup> Linda Chalker-Scott, "The Myth of Biodynamic Agriculture," *Horticultural Myths*, Washington State University Extension website, accessed September 23, 2017, <https://s3.wp.wsu.edu/uploads/sites/403/2015/03/biodynamic-agriculture.pdf>

<sup>440</sup> Steiner, *What is Biodynamics?*, 107-108.

their various methods of farming. The adherents to biodynamics are evangelical about their preparations, but I can understand why the critiques exist of this spiritual agricultural method.

The other three gentlemen<sup>441</sup> discussing spirituality in agriculture are Gary Fick, John E. Carroll, and Fred Kirschenmann. All three have written on the topic of farming and spirituality, but with a limited view. Kirschenmann and Carroll refer to spirituality as a way of connecting with the universe, or the “BIG picture,” as Carroll writes.<sup>442</sup> They critique capitalism and the disconnection from the land due to large monoculture farming. They cite very similar sources in their books: Thomas Berry, Wendell Berry, Aldo Leopold, and Larry Rasmussen. When Kirschenmann’s work is explored, non-human relationships are vital, but spirituality is not given its due as a field with important ramifications beyond just ethics and relationships. For instance, he writes, “It could, in fact, be argued that the ‘spiritual’ is simply a way of understanding our world that acknowledges the connection and relationship to the rest of the expanding universe. And with respect to agriculture this suggests that we need to begin to pay at least as much attention to how the rest of the world works as we do to determining how to acquire our food, shelter and energy.”<sup>443</sup> But there is much more history and context to the word and meaning of “spirituality.” Kirschenmann keeps putting the word “spiritual” and “spirituality” in quotes throughout his article, but without any reference to what those quotation marks mean.

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<sup>441</sup> Should be noted they are all white and hold academic positions. I say this to point out their privilege in their view of land, location, and employment. They do not locate themselves as such but this important to see their view in what shapes spirituality. They are not marginalized. They own land. They have positions of power.

<sup>442</sup> John E. Carroll, *Sustainability and Spirituality* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2004), 4.

<sup>443</sup> Fred Kirschenmann, “Spirituality in Agriculture,” (2005). Leopold Center Conference Papers. 6. [http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/leopold\\_conf/6](http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/leopold_conf/6), 9.

Spirituality is not just the opposite view of Descartes and Francis Bacon as Kirschenmann posits.<sup>444</sup> Boiling down spirituality to reductionist views of the universe and mystery is an overly simplistic way to consider the vast area and traditions of spiritual formation, study, and research.

Carroll's investment in the conversation is visiting and giving examples of multiple Sisters of the Earth monasteries who he says are the best candidates of integrating spirituality and sustainability. He makes bold claims such as, "In considering these communities, it is important to note that, in North American society, it is Roman Catholics who have traditionally formed spiritual communities."<sup>445</sup> Statements like this one do not serve his argument well if he is indeed studying spiritual communities. His definition of being connected to the universe and our cosmologies feels very limiting if he is only looking at Roman Catholic communities. Of course, monastic and aesthetic communities can practice the type of spirituality he is talking about: connected to the earth, sustainable living, and focused on justice when one has access to land, time, and resources to do so. But he does not give a caveat about his focus or location. Again, to limit spirituality to such a small focus group does not provide a proper definition either. The examples he gives are strong and demonstrate a beautiful earth-focused ethic, but are also gendered. To this point, he gives a limp essentialist argument from Thomas Berry that women are more attune to these types of issues.<sup>446</sup> His mention of ecofeminism as important to these women is limited to one sentence, but does not cite any ecofeminist theologians in his work. Again, this restricts his view as well.

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<sup>444</sup> Kirschenmann, "Spirituality," 9.

<sup>445</sup> Carroll, *Sustainability*, 22.

<sup>446</sup> Carroll, *Sustainability*, 57.

For Fick's part, his book turns to chapter upon chapter of using certain biblical verses to explain how farming should be done. Spirituality is not defined in his book, but used as an umbrella term to encompass gratitude and tradition. Spiritual relationships are a key point of his model as are ethical, economic and social, and ecological in his Venn diagram (which I will revisit later). But, he confines his definition of spiritual relationships as relationships which provide joy and quality of life so people will want to continue to farm without detailing what this idea means. He also does not discuss what it means if spiritual relationships are outside of the bounds of joy.<sup>447</sup> His work remains an important treatise on scripture and farming, but not spirituality.

The biggest loss in these works is relating spirituality solely to the cosmos. Cosmology is important and the works of Thomas Berry and Brian Swimme are valuable. But again, an over-reliance on their work and other white men (Wendell Berry, Aldo Leopold, Wes Jackson), to reiterate, leaves others voices and perspectives out of the conversation.

Having a sense of our relation to the cosmos is vital, but the discussion in this dissertation flips the dialogue from looking up to the cosmos for depth to the soil and seed. In exploring what is happening beneath the surface, as a starting place, the individuals in this dissertation are given priority in what they experience in their relationships to God and place. Cosmology is rarely discussed (if ever), yet their connection to their work, land, communities and the Divine is palpable. Their focus is different, not necessarily because of their gender, but because of how gendered divisions have shaped society. The work of bodies is emphasized, and access to land, and living with the realities of death, life, and neighbor are all worked out in these narratives.

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<sup>447</sup> Gary W. Fick, *Food, Farming, and Faith* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2008), 169.

There is a sense they are working towards reconciliation and something larger than themselves, but they did not come at their work with a critique of all that is wrong in the world. They came at it from their histories, experiences, and embodied knowledge of what it meant to partner with their land, neighbor, and the Divine. These areas were not segregated either. They moved in and out of each other within their bodied boundaries. A focus on the body, work, life, death, resurrection, and community partnerships (even if different farming models are practiced) is indeed different from the agricultural spirituality literature to-date. In this way, a new model emerges focusing on the most important points from chapters one through three and the narratives from the data. Incidentally, the farmers' stories move the main arguments from Part I into new territory.

### **The Edges of Something New**

The new model of agricultural spirituality developed namely from the farmers' stories in this study. The model takes a cue from the farmers in that it does not overly rely on one voice, one practice, or even one method of farming. It is not about *only* relationships, or *only* place, or *only* God. Instead when these three areas merge, we see a model of spiritual formation these women are undertaking. This spiritual formation model and application builds on the elements and principles from Part I. They have: 1. A rooted sense of place; 2. Embodied use of senses especially where eating is concerned; 3. Relational awareness involving contemplative seeing and justice; 4. Reengaging work; and 5. Cycles of life and death as we saw in chapter one. They are rooted in real situations and relationships while practicing sound management and equity that is found in a true partnership ethic. There is moral consideration for stewardship and justice in all their work built on respect for their land and all life around them as seen in chapter two. But interestingly, none of their foci stop with life and what will make life more successful. Instead,

all the stories grapple with death. There are the deaths of animals, dreams, and even their loved ones. Their posture echoes that of compassionate ecofeminist practice which has awareness of sentience, but also does not stop there. Instead, these farmers champion a model that chooses to face death head-on because of the transformative and incarnational power of the resurrection around them.

In so many ways this sounds like the work midwives have done for centuries. The code of ethics for this vocation is discussed in chapter three. It is an ethic of education, nurturing, monitoring, and advocating. So, when we see the grounding definition of agricultural spirituality in the five points from chapter one as well as the partnership ethics and compassionate ecofeminist practice in chapter two, it comes together in the case studies of women's resilience in chapter three in their embodied work as farmer-midwives. The spirit evoked in the historical narratives demonstrate activism, leadership, and community advocacy with a rooted sense of mutuality for all parties involved. Again, I am not making this case to say women are more in touch with these aspects because they are women. Rather, they are more in touch with these aspects because of necessity and survival. Indeed, their life, death, and resurrection is because of the women who have gone before them. Much in the same way I am here because of my mother and grandmothers, so do these women take these stories of relationships and place and build lives of advocacy and mutuality dependent on tradition and community. This work of agricultural spirituality brings a new lens of radical ordinariness needed in the conversation.

Bringing all of the chapters together, then, demonstrates not just how the farmers are using the agricultural spirituality list from chapter one, along with partnership ethics, and midwifery, but how they are radically engaged with these concepts in a profound and even different way than mentioned in previous studies. They are truly able to see the work they do as a



process, not just a reengagement. The work is not just about reclaiming planting, harvesting, and eating. Also, they are not paralyzed by the work or by the state of the world. They know what they need to do in their part of the world. The model showcases work in a new way where the concept of work holds the model together because of how the women in this study embodied their roles on each farm. Embodiedness is not about senses and eating, but strength and ability to show up to each task in front of them, fully aware of what is required of them.

Further, as some of the cases in chapter one demonstrate, often only the one-time dramatized accounts of a farmer in court or burning their crops are seen as the lone way to send a message about justice. This is not unimportant, but the point I am making with the stories in this dissertation is more attention needs to be given to the steadfastness of radical ordinariness with which these farmers are dedicating their lives without accolade. This steadfastness points to them being ministers-of-sorts in their communities. Even if they chagrin the title of philosopher (or other titles) as Amber did, she named something in our first meeting of vital importance. We do not need for them to adopt these titles for their work to matter; rather, we must change our lenses of what a minister and/or philosopher is. The farmers see and work with the soil; they see and work with the animals; they see and work with people. If they stop seeing and stop working, then their farm ceases to exist in many ways. An entire ecosystem changes. So they educate. The farms in this study are all dedicated to bringing people in to demonstrate what they are doing. Elementary-aged children to adults all have benefitted from their work and relearned what it means to grow food and care for a place. The list in chapter one emphasizes what happens to someone when they engage with land and place, but does not focus on bringing others into the work as these women do so well. They do not need to be educated, but rather seen as the model

educators to whom we go for wisdom and better models. They are the prophets and teachers we need to look to for exemplars of agricultural spirituality.

The radicalness also takes on a new shape in how they approach the edges of their work. As mentioned earlier, Bahnson writes, “In farming, and in life, pay attention to relationships. Stay close to the edges, for that’s where you’ll find the greatest energy.”<sup>448</sup> Davis reminds us of these edges in the Bible, too, as it was mandated to leave part of the harvest there for the most vulnerable in the community.<sup>449</sup> The edges of the farms in this dissertation consist of the farmers not just helping their vulnerable human neighbors though (as they all do), but the definition of neighbor is understood as an ecosystem with many members – human and nonhuman. Their understanding of neighbor in this way is the definition practical theology needs to expand beyond the limit of just humans as living documents.<sup>450</sup> They literally create ponds (Alice) and keep forests and maintain creeks (Judy and Amber). They plant the edges of the fields with hedgerows which benefit the soil, air, insects, and small beasts (Sarah, Jeannette, and Reyna). They are reintroducing an entire habitat of native species so local birds will have a haven amongst the coffee plants (Louise). Louise’s vision in this work is that both the workers of the land and birds can flourish simultaneously. These actions are chosen; they are not mandated. In return, these actions benefit all parties. I would even go so far to say that the humans are not even the main beneficiaries of these actions. They are radically rethinking the edges of what they do.

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<sup>448</sup> Bahnson, *Soil*, 119.

<sup>449</sup> Davis, *Scripture*, 78.

<sup>450</sup> See page 19 for conversation about Anton Boison’s definition of practical theology understood as humans as living documents.

This concept of what we do with the edges is important in a time when farmers are taking down more and more fences between properties because cattle do not roam the land anymore. As I learned on a tour of an Iowa farm at a Women, Food and Agriculture Network conference in November 2015, acreage and property lines are seen through Google earth and screens, not by walking the land, letting one's shadow touch the earth, as Louise stated.<sup>451</sup> It might seem like an act of justice to bring down fences, but it speaks to a larger issue of sameness and lack of diversity. The metaphor stands out of fences coming down when everyone adopts the same idea. Fears are put to rest of not having to worry about cattle roaming across lines and breaking fences. But what does it mean when the edges are no longer tended and fences are not mended with neighbors? What does it mean when fences coming down means assimilation and disconnection? Disconnection remains with land, animal, and people. These actions all seem ordinary to the farmers and make sense from a profit and upkeep standpoint. But they account for a different kind of awareness, being, and work where what makes most sense is what the system demands – not what neighbors need. The idea of neighbor being soil, plants, and animals is vital to understand. The farmers in this study changed their awareness of neighbor and the results are amazing to behold. Yet, it is not glamorous or easy in any stretch of the imagination. The work is hard and everyone in this study acknowledged that. The work is never done. The work is in their tired bodies. But they keep going because they are resilient in ever-pressing circumstances, working for resurrection.

### **The Model**

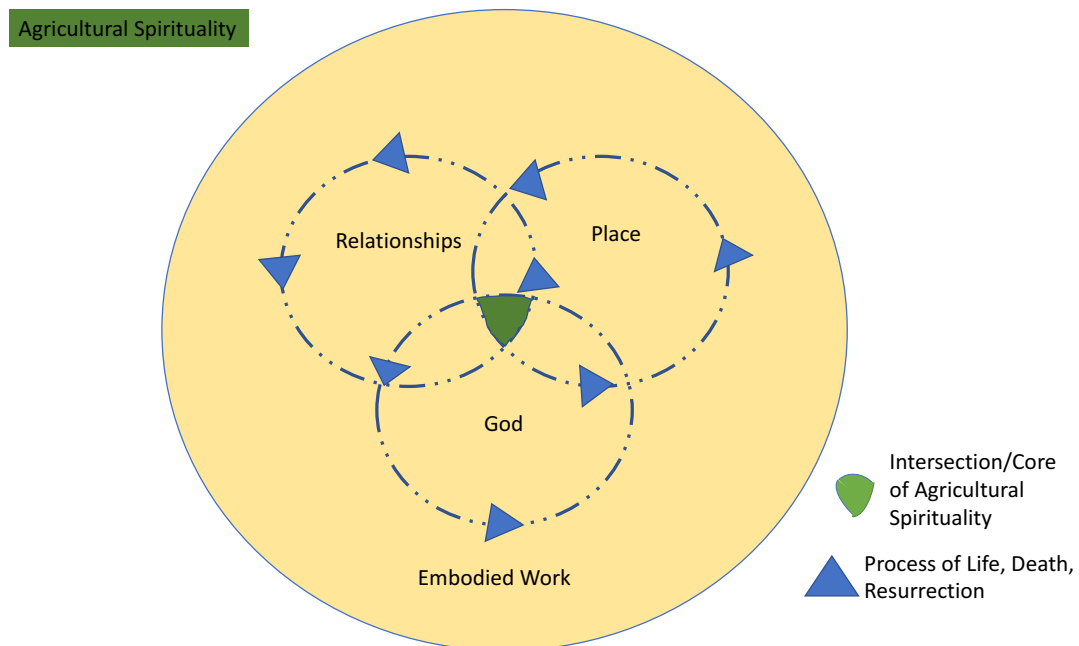
The embodied work is the boundary for this model as all we have are experiences in our bodies. As we look at the model (See figure 10.1), this idea of embodied work holds the model

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<sup>451</sup> Hanna, interview.

together. Inside of this boundary are the perforated areas of God, place, and relationships. They are permeable due to the nature of time, history, and elements outside of human control. Even weather from across the globe can permeate a farmer's stories in radical ways. Also interesting is how permeable the tension is with each farmer in their situation and how they hold it so openly. Whether it is a neighboring farmer spraying herbicide (Alice) or a huge dairy farm keeping their cows inside all day (Judy and Amber), they call these people their neighbors and knew their names. There is dignity and respect across the board, even if there is disagreement or women shouldering more of the work (Sarah). Still they stay in their vocations, hoping and working for change in most cases. This is further proof that their views of God, place, and relationships are open to transformation and the work of partnership molding them.

Figure 10.1



The model illustrated in figure 10.1 also helps categorize the various codes into broader themes in the stories. “Embodied Work” holds body, experiences, farm practices and tasks, all of which speak and give witness to all that is held in the model. Work encompasses so much of this research. The themes of relationships, place, and God all happen in the context of working very hard in their boundaried experience. “Relationships” consist of the community, hospitality, and web of life categories. “Place” examines the web alongside the ecosystem, stewardship, and land in each area. “God” entails the references to experiences of God, scriptures, and spirituality in the narratives.<sup>452</sup> Circling each area is an animated arrow/triangle illuminating the thread of life, death, and resurrection which is so prominent, not only in the farmers’ narratives, but in part one of this dissertation, too. Each section has its own life, death, and resurrection process which being aware of and active in is important in these stories. Again, all of this is held in the experience of the bodies and narratives in this research. I am arguing we cannot travel outside our bodies, but certainly the circle of one entity could entangle with another; making for the model to be more like a soil molecule where they can pass over and through each other. It could be argued the outer circle could be permeated as well as bodies are informed by their pasts and other matters outside of their control. However, our pasts and other matters are still experienced in our bodies as I do not separate mind and body. Perhaps we function differently as humans depending our different abilities and mobility, but brainstem and body are united in this model.

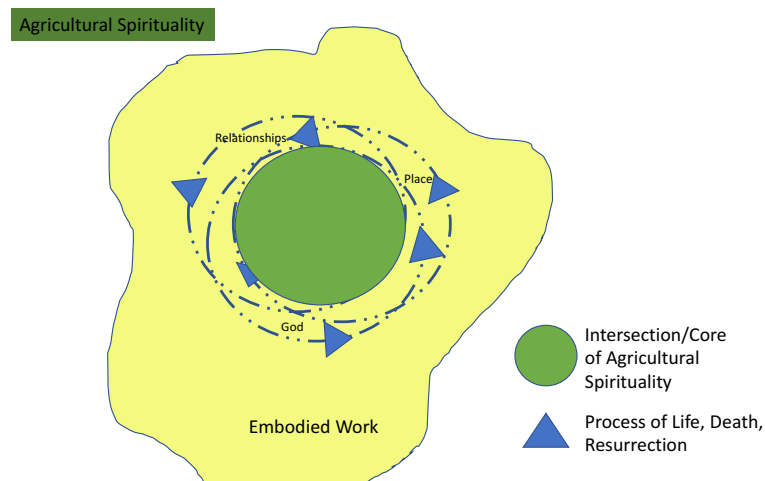
Within the model, each area can exist on its own and certainly there are forms of spirituality which consist of just relationship and God, or relationship and place, or God and place. The model, however, helps to merge all three together in relation to human experience and work. When this merging occurs, these are moments of witnessing how agricultural spirituality

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<sup>452</sup> See Appendix D page 277 for in vivo codes

thrives. Perhaps I only had glimpses, as the first model (Figure 10.1) illustrates, of a seed where the three merge, but it could be argued these farmers operate with much more overlap in the model at certain times as well (Figure 10.2).

Figure 10.2



This second example of the model represents a messier version of boundaries because life experience is not as neat as a clean circle would communicate. What the different representations of the model demonstrate is that this model is best explored as an animated three-dimensional model where the circles are breathing and moving and, in turn, colliding with other circles. It is meant to be lived, experienced, and played with, not be static.

As the center seed comes into focus, no matter the size, the intersection of these areas builds on the foundation from historical writers like Hildegard and Aquinas in chapter one and assists in clarifying an inconsistent discussion in the fields of practical theology, spirituality, and ecology. The farmers' life-work stories help bridge theory and application in a strong way which demonstrates how one can be part of a faith tradition, in their body, and in their community using

their vocation to advocate for mutuality and transformation. These are midwives practicing agricultural spirituality who are birthing bold ways of using the partnership ethic. That is what the center of the model represents.

The model is a representation of both a way forward and the problem, though. In a way, it represents something ecofeminists have pushed back on which is separating different areas. By explaining each area separately in what follows, I am not attempting to make a case for separation, but instead show how they interconnect, partner, and merge into the one-legged center. Indeed, this is not a three-legged stool, but a one-legged stool that one must sit on. Fick makes this case with his own Venn diagram for agricultural sustainability. In his model, he argues, “Agricultural sustainability is like a one-legged stool supported by ecological social-economic, and spiritual-ethical relationships interwoven into a single supporting leg. To make the stool stand, we must sit on it, thus providing with our own legs the sustainable balance of both attention to process and orientation to the future.”<sup>453</sup>

Similarly, here, I can visualize the milking stool built like a “T” he discusses where all of the components come together much like the day I learned how to milk Twist, one of the Springstroh’s cows. I was bundled up in my layers, feeling the cold of March. Twist was gracious and as I walked up to her, such a huge beast, I could sense she knew I was someone new. Amber showed me how to strip a cow (the process of beginning to milk by hand). I needed to be present to my body, to the environment, to the animal, and to the milk. It took me a while to get, but it was not lost on me that this animal gave birth recently. Likewise, I would be producing milk again soon. I also would be hooking myself up to a breast pump at times. Some people would call that unnatural, but we are doing what we need to for our family to survive in

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<sup>453</sup> Fick, *Food*, 174.

the healthiest way possible. It is almost meditative listening the pump. Oddly, but in a way that made sense to me, I felt connected to this animal in this period of birthing and milking – the acts of motherhood. I felt the merging of this model in my legs and belly and experience. It is about the center, the seed, which may look small, but is responsible for the whole. Meaning is lost when the areas exist only by themselves. When they come together in life and death, new meaning and spiritual formation are birthed.

In the journey to the center, I will now discuss the significance of each circle's themes in light of the stories, codes, and research. The movement of life, death and resurrection relevant to each area follows. Finally, the seed of agricultural spirituality will present itself in the end.

### Embodied Work

The work done on the farms in this dissertation is breathtaking because they still practice techniques the agricultural industry has moved away from completely. It is not that the farmers shy away from technology. They use milking machines, fertilizers, and tractors, but they are not insistent on growth for growth's sake. They are interested in showing up to the tasks at hand in their bodies. The list is long: Milking, shoveling, feeding, sterilizing, weeding, planting, harvesting, digging, pruning, wood chipping, cleaning, spraying, cooking, preserving. They do not philosophize about these acts or even their bodies. Jeannette tells me, "Everyone weeds," and she means it. But in that statement, it demonstrates not just a single action, but how they treat bodies. No matter one's role at Abundant Table, everyone is expected to weed. Bodies are treated with respect in the field, but also the expectation is that bodies will work.

Louise and Judy, the oldest of the farmers, both work so hard and desire to work until their bodies tell them they cannot anymore. This is exemplified in an email I receive learning of Judy's heart attack shortly after I left the farm, but she returns to work not long after the incident,



shoveling, raking, and so much more. Apparently, it is going to take a lot more to knock her off her feet. Louise straps on a backpack of neem spray and goes to work to protect her plants while I am there. She, too, is planting, weeding, and spraying day in and day out. In this, there is an appreciation of the work their bodies can do, but interestingly, none of the farmers spent a lot of time discussing their bodies. Rather, it is the acts of work witnessed and the explanations of what it takes to run farm that is discussed time and time again.

For instance, Alice ponders work often. She tells me,

What I would love to do is open everyone's minds to the fact that they, like, they don't have to work for rewards. They can work for goals. And for the reward of good work and seeing a job well done and knowing that the job is important. They don't have to have a boss, and they don't have to have a lower person, and we can be equals, and we could be creative. I would like everybody to just be able to shake loose, including me in everything that we were trained that tells us differently. What would it feel like if we could shake all that loose for... three months? And just try another belief system on. And again, it doesn't have to be mine, but what if it wasn't true that you had to - for the rest of your life - work at some job - that you don't love - in order to make a lot of money so that someday you'll be happy?<sup>454</sup>

She is not alone in her thinking. Sarah, Jeannette, Judy, Reyna, and Louise all discussed various aspects of farming being a vocation of calling and contentment. Obviously, this work is done in their bodies. But they would rather show me what they do than explain it in an interview. Louise tours me around the coffee plants for an entire afternoon. Judy embodies an entirely different enlivened energy in the barn than in her house. Amber contemplates how her body is different from a man's body, but she still shows up to the work every day and does amazing things with those cows.

Overall, there is a consensus in all of the farmers of a dedication and desire to do *this* work. Nothing else came into play without the work. The work requires sacrifice; it requires a

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<sup>454</sup> McGary, interview.

different energy than sitting in an office as Jeannette and Amber point out, but they understand what the requirements are. Those requirements are able bodies to do the work, and there is a longing at the vegetable farms (Abundant Table and Mustard Seed) for more help from human bodies. But they also make do with whoever appears each season.

There is also the matter of how their bodies interact with other bodies. Policy issues and abuses are discussed. They want bodies to be treated better, but also understand bodies face life and death issues. That is not an excuse for not addressing issues like rape, livable wages, and animal cruelty, but rather, when it comes to non-human bodies and how to work these issues out, they know it is more nuanced. Cows are sent to slaughter, bunnies are killed, rocks are thrown at hawks, and beetles are squished. This is part of human bodies making these decisions. And, while it might be deemed necessary by the farmers, these matters are never easy. Bodies colliding with bodies is always explained, not with justification, but with resignation to what the work requires.

Within this theme of embodied work, the model of agricultural spirituality can be understood through the work of humans and their narratives, but it could also translate to other bodies as well. A seed has a body in this model in so far as it is living matter. It has a process where it lives, dies, and resurrects. It is part of the process and experience of spirituality in so far as it has relationships with the soil, water, sun, and microbes. It needs to be in a place, deeply rooted, and it is imbued with the Spirit in a panentheistic sense. So, yes, the Divine is present to that work even when a human is not. Seeds collide with human hands (sometimes) and experiences. Is it conscious of all of this? That I cannot say as the limits of this research are mainly with the narratives of the farmers represented here, but it is challenging to think of spiritualities beyond human bodies. This model introduces and allows for the emergence of a

deeper conversation about how bodies and bodies of living matter collide in spiritual experiences.

Ultimately, this is a conversation and renewed appreciation about how we look at and value work in the US. These farmers do not see their jobs as menial or unimportant. They wish more people felt as they do about their jobs. That was true on each farm. They welcomed work and all that came with it – the joys and heartaches. While they might not relish in every aspect, they show up to the experience, knowing what is necessary and that their faith led them to living out this work differently.

### God

These farms were chosen for their inherent connections to Christian denominations. That being said, it would seem obvious the farmers have some connection to God. But I wanted to find out how this connection manifested. The threads most of the seven interviewees have in common when it comes to God is a motivation fueled by working for God. They want to learn about God, teach others about God, and recognize this work as a gift from God. Alice feels like her “faith is connected to everything” she does.<sup>455</sup> She sees God in nature: the sky, dew, and frost. Louise says faith is fundamental to her farm; farming feeds her faith. Both Louise and Alice feel profound connections to God lying on the ground. They felt part of something bigger and connected to the world around them. Laying on the ground is comforting and healing to them.

Amber’s faith is lived out as a farmer as well. She explains how she understands her faith as being connected to this world in that Jesus used parables of nature all the time and everything

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<sup>455</sup> McGary, interview.

in the earth is the Lord's. Her mother, Judy, echoes this belief telling me faith has everything to do with her farming. She sees God taking care of everything. Her interview may have been the shortest, but with simple quotes like "Rejoice in the Lord always," I gained a sense of her belief and practice of that verse.<sup>456</sup> The farmers of Abundant Table see these reflections, too, when they take care of the land. God is everywhere, Jeannette says. Separately, Reyna backs this up with her experience telling me God is not just in the heavens and sky, but on the farm and in the cycles of life. Sarah sees these cycles, too, but namely in the Eucharist which is born of water and soil and connection to each other and these elements.

Because God is everywhere, these farmers see scripture differently. They know what a mustard seed looks like and how it transforms an ecosystem. Amber excitedly recalls calves released from their stalls and relates it to Malachi 4:2 immediately.<sup>457</sup> Amber and Judy both have a fondness for bringing scripture into their work more than the other farmers, but Jesus and his way of being in the world through care and reconciliation is brought up by everyone. Jeannette and Amber both have a profound sense of their view of God transforming from a condemning, harsh, removed persona to a kind, restorative, father-like figure. The farmers also experience God profoundly in farming practices and disciplines like planting, weeding, harvesting, and cooking.

Overall, the sense is that this land is not theirs as much as it is God's, as witnessed in their work and sacred text. Everyone has a call to steward the land and, with some, animals too. But there is a deeper understanding that stewarding and caring is not to be romanticized. God is as much in the process of farming as in the farm itself. The farmers all recognize the roll death

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<sup>456</sup> Springstroh, J., interview.

<sup>457</sup> Springstroh, J., interview.

plays in their work as well as restoration and resurrection. Judy comments on the grief of letting a cow go, but also reflects that this was God's way to make room for another to come into the milking room.<sup>458</sup> Jeannette walks away from vegetarianism after killing cucumber beetles.<sup>459</sup> Sarah is fervent in her belief of how the Eucharist is forever connected to the farm in life and death.<sup>460</sup> What could, and sometimes does, weigh them down is always coupled with an acknowledgement, though, that God is always present. The infinite is there in the finite just as panentheism suggests. Further, the little things are never underestimated whether it is a butterfly passing by or taking a walk to see the wildflowers, words like rejoicing, grateful, and thankful are mentioned often. These women are not naïve in their gratitude, but the deeper connection to the hard work is understood in light of their spiritual connections to the Divine.

### Place

The work could not be conducted without another connection to *place*. Discussion of place and the land always consisted of the historical context of each farm. Whether a farm has to move locations like Abundant Table or calls a place home for 100 years like the Springstrohs, each farmer is linked to their land in unique and important ways. The land in each interview and tour of the farms are marked with words like “beautiful,” “love,” “gorgeous,” and “special.” These descriptors mirror earlier studies like Hintz’s “Ecology of Love,” demonstrating a strong connection to the land. But the connections run deeper than just words. Every farmer understands not only their history in the place, but the history of the soil on their farm. Glacial histories, volcanic histories, and watershed information are all shared.

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<sup>458</sup> Springstroh, J., interview.

<sup>459</sup> Ban, interview.

<sup>460</sup> Nolan, interview.

They understand the past and even more importantly, every farm is dedicated to improving and restoring habitat on their land. What this looked like is Louise dedicating herself to planting native trees to help the ecosystem and animals around her. Amber and Judy treasure the tiling work John did before he died and remain committed to keeping the creek clean. They also leave the corn stalks for the deer to eat at the end of the season and value the woods on their property. Alice and her husband are devoted to the prairie restoration on their property, and Abundant Table always tries to plant pollinators and hedgerow along their field to help with natural management of pests and animals. The attention paid to this work of stewarding and caring for the land is not unique to one farm. Louise's quote rings true that the most important thing on a farm is a farmer's shadow.<sup>461</sup> Everyone knows the animals roaming their land, the weather patterns, and the various soils they work with. As Amber told me, "It's why farmers talk about the weather so much. It's not small talk to them. It tells you about their workplace and the environment and if you talk to someone who works outside, they get it."<sup>462</sup> Paying attention to their surroundings is part of the job, but a welcomed one.

However, this work of being present to place is not without tension. One of the most profound themes from the farmers is a sense of realism when dealing with these places that grow food and the ecosystems in and around them. Alice laments the pesticide drift issue around her and other farmers in Iowa. She wonders why her farm survives being so close to the spray applied to the crops around her land.<sup>463</sup> Almost all of the farmers feel the tension with needing to produce food from the ground, but recognize the land's animal occupants, too. How do all parties

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<sup>461</sup> Hanna, interview.

<sup>462</sup> Springstroh, A., interview.

<sup>463</sup> McGary, interview.

benefit? Louise ponders if they should do anything at all on their farm. But she quickly realizes it is a justice issue to stop farming as well.<sup>464</sup> The role these farmers play on each farm requires them to be in the place, not taking themselves out of it. They desire to make their farms healthier for all lifeforms, but this does not mean each life is going to survive. Certainly, the Springstroh's feel this and embody this in watching their dad/husband and brother die, but most feel this in weighing daily options of how to engage with the animals who would eat all of the produce if left to their own devices. Everyone recognizes their limits as only one entity on the farm, but also their dedication to see the place thrive. Amber's profound statement the first day of my visit that "we don't live in Eden" sticks with me.<sup>465</sup> It is not that we need to dominate over place, but realize we cannot romanticize place either. Partnership does not mean that everyone is going to get their way. Rather, in facing the fact that this work is not easy, they give moral consideration to what the place needs to keep a certain balance. This means deer cannot run through Alice's farm year-round. It means birds are shot with slingshots or distracted with large kites at Abundant Table. It means using the manure in the soil in Wisconsin and planting trees in Hawaii. It means decisions are made in context and very locally and situationally to what is healthiest for the parties present in that moment on the land.

On another note, Sarah spoke of not only the importance of place, but the need to see displacement as vital in the discussion too. As they do not own their land and shift locations every few years, she feels the importance of defining place from different angles.<sup>466</sup> This would include the immigrant or guest visa laborer who has limited rights and the young farmers who do

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<sup>464</sup> Hanna, interview.

<sup>465</sup> Personal recording by author, March 19, 2016.

<sup>466</sup> Nolan, interview.

not own land. How do we make space for them to be heard on their connection to place in these conversations? It is a key question because just as women are left out of numerous agricultural conversations so are the marginalized laborers and exploited workers. The farmers in this research, though, feel connected to these different areas and understand the webs of relationship making up each place. They know each place has been transformed by them, but recognize the transformation by other forces too. This exemplifies the permeable nature of the model in that the history and weather from different parts of the world can come directly into play with a place. No matter the place, though, it is understood that the work of transformation and farming in each location gives something of deep value and meaning to them. Consequently, each place they work at benefits from their lens of restoration and right relationship as well. A symbiotic relationship was not just happening with plants, but with animals and souls too.

### Relationships

Perhaps the strongest theme resonating with each farm is that of relationship. Plants and animals are given names and known for their personalities. Naming is not about domination, but friendship. The web of life is not just a collection of objects to these farmers. For instance, the cows at the Springstroh's farm have family lineages, and Amber can see characteristics in calves from their mothers. Louise and Bob give names to all of the large trees on their property, but also learn the native Hawaiian names of every plant, too. Further, not only are these farmers connected to their land, plants, and animals, but to their communities and churches. They help run education programs for schools on and off the farms. The hospitality of each place is strong with a list of events including potlucks, farm dinners, guest speakers, parties, land blessings, and retreats. Each farm is open to welcoming anyone who comes by and their stories demonstrate the truth of this statement. There were Muslim interns at Abundant Table and international students



who wanted to bring their families to the farm in Wisconsin. Alice regularly hosts volunteer work days for whomever would like to join them in the work, and Louise gives the keys to the church pastor for people who need a retreat when they live back on the mainland part of the year.

There is also another key aspect to their community relationships of not judging their neighbors. These women know healthy ways to restore their farms and have strong opinions on pesticides, labor practices, and farm sizes. But they also respect their neighbors and understand people are doing the best they can for the sake of their families and socio economic situations. Reflecting on my drive with Judy to the various family farms with 9,000 heads of cattle in Wisconsin and driving by thousands of acres of corn being sprayed with pesticides in Iowa, I am still struck by their tone with their neighbors' practices. Judy explains that everyone minded their own business and it is not her place to judge what they were doing.<sup>467</sup> Alice knows her husband should talk to certain farmers more than her because of cultural gender stereotypes. She does not believe in the stereotypes, being resolutely feminist, but wants to learn to work with her neighbors.<sup>468</sup> Sarah knows the surrounding farmers respect her and when things happen like selling their land, she wishes they would sell to her, but understands they are doing it for their families.<sup>469</sup> The vitriol I hear in the news about GMOs and abuse to animals on factory farms just is not there as there is an embracing of neighbor at each location. Their opinions are that there is not one moral way to farm, and their attitudes gain community respect.

This embracing does not mean the farmers are not working for change in the industry though or noticing the cracks in the system. They certainly all have a relationship to justice on

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<sup>467</sup> Springstroh, J., interview.

<sup>468</sup> McGary, interview.

<sup>469</sup> Nolan, interview.

their farms too. Abundant Table is at the forefront of fighting for laborers rights and policy changes to improve pay and conditions for workers in their county. Three of the four farms implement untraditional economic structures as well. Mustard Seed gives away two-thirds of their produce. Louise gives her farm manager 80% of the profit from the coffee. Lastly, Abundant Table pays their farmers a livable wage. Even Springstroh farm is steadfast in remaining a 56-stall (debt-free, I might add) dairy farm while everyone around them sells or expands into huge operations. All of these initiatives are ways these farmers are confronting a broken food system and building relationships differently in their spaces.

The women in this study also know their roles as farmers and as women is unique. While at times some men talk down to them, most are complimentary of their male counterparts while understanding they each had to find their way in this field. Again, they know they signed up for hard work, but they embrace it and live into the tension instead of denying it or fighting it. Further, the use of their bodies was appreciated as they each desire to be engaged with the work and come alive in different ways while they work versus sitting in the interviews. Walking the land, picking weeds, exploring forests, and milking cows are enjoyable and welcome in their daily lives. The web of life and relationships in each location are worth the investment and energy. While there might be hard times, there is a deeper calling they were all grateful for in their vocations.

Lastly, there is a relationship with the farming process and work in each location. In this way, place, God and relationship all merge – as they do in so many areas in each section. The seasons and rhythms of each place speak to the women in this research. There are relationships mentioned with the sky and weeds, with insects and birds, with invasive species, and with drought and harvest. There is a relationship of transformation and connection to God on each

farm. Reyna's quote of harvesting what you plant in your life, whether it is resurrection or destruction speaks to this relationship.<sup>470</sup> So did Alice's discussion of how she works with wanting be good and holy, not for the sake of her ego, but for the sake of the importance of the relationship she has with God and the land.<sup>471</sup> Amber mentions the pace of each season and how her relationship with the farm is different in the summer than in the winter.<sup>472</sup> These women each grapple with reconciling the hard work of farming and form strong relationships with themselves, with their surroundings, and the Divine. They know what agriculture requires of them, but also know this is a spiritual endeavor at its core. What this means is they work so fluidly in each area of the model – place, relationship, God – not considering one to be disconnected from the other at any time. They show up to their bodies and work every day, understanding there is more at work in the web than just their tasks. They know weeding is more of an attitude and spiritual discipline than it is a farm task. The same could be said for planting, composting, and harvesting as well. They attend to their farms like a midwife caring for a birthing mother, knowing what term she is in, if she is in labor or distress, and watch the cycles of life and death unfold around them. They truly are partners in every sense of the word.

### Life, Death, and Resurrection

Watching the cycles of life, death, and resurrection unfold in their lives in each area of God, place, and relationship, is a strong and important theme in the data. Jeannette's turning away from vegetarianism due to killing beetles, Alice discussing how she wants to hold both the beautiful and horrible, and Amber facing the reality of not living in Eden, but learning to love

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<sup>470</sup> Ortega, interview.

<sup>471</sup> McGary, interview.

<sup>472</sup> Springstroh, A., interview.

her roots all speak directly to life outside of a black and white, dualistic paradigm.<sup>473</sup> They understand that to eat means something must die, whether it is a plant or animal. But there are also so many more layers to this process. In vegetable and coffee farming, each woman discusses the reality of killing bunnies and insects, chasing birds away, and dealing with invasive species of animals, insects, and plants. They must give up their romanticized versions of place, relationship, and God when working with literal life and death issues.

The meaningful part of their work, though, is that the stories never ended with death. Resurrection, rebirth, and reconciliation are part of a process they are working with daily. The arrows around the circles on the model exemplify this aspect in that resurrection makes sure life keeps going. Hence the phrase I wrote earlier in the dissertation of resurrection being a process and not a theory; farmers understand this key element in theology more than most people. They understand killing is part of the job, as Alice mentions.<sup>474</sup> Hunting deer or pigs is not far from their minds as it is needed on certain farms to keep the ecosystem in balance. But then there are practices like letting the fences down in the winter so deer could eat what is there in Iowa and in Wisconsin, letting some of the corn stay in the field for them to eat as well at season's end. Again, the boundaries are blurry. The rules are not hard and fast as the focus is more on the process of how life works on a farm.

Judy and Amber have to send a few cows to slaughter whether they are males or born with "ugly udders." Amber laments with me that she wants creation to be perfect. When she watches the new calves, she feels close to experiencing resurrection, but knows she must be open to the way life works:

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<sup>473</sup> Ban, interview; McGary, interview, Springstroh, A., interview.

<sup>474</sup> McGary, interview.

You know I want to hold on to those moments and you just, you can't when you're here. The fall is so present and not only around you, but in you, in your attitude and how you're facing things. But I think in nature it's easier to separate from yourself and go, "Even if everything's perfect. Even if I treat the animals perfectly, death and decay is still going to happen." So what does that mean? How do you reconcile? I still have to cull cows at the end of it.<sup>475</sup>

Where she ends up is in the cycle she adopted from her Bible study leaders of creation, fall, redemption, glory. Her vocation is about living this out and giving up control because even if she did everything right, she tells me, bad things still happen. Knowing the stories of the deaths of her dad and brother, this makes sense. The choice she makes then is to learn from the cycle and process.

Another example is Reyna's story of transformation and personal redemption. Her life lived as an immigrant and the mother of a child with special needs gives a filer to her narrative unlike the others. But she has chosen to learn from the farm around her too. She compares her life to the earth telling me, even though a person can live a hard life and go through death-like circumstances, "you can be reborn in a very fertile place."<sup>476</sup> She explains how she had to let many things die off in her life in order to see them grow again. It is a balance of death and life, not one more than the other. For her, the pattern she embodies is about planting and harvesting. She tells me, "You are always going to harvest what you've been planting. So if you're planting destruction, you're going to harvest destruction. So if you want to create or recreate your life you're going to have a resurrection. So that's really how I see this God, this God of second chances that he will always be there to receive you."<sup>477</sup> And she sees this with her life and the plants around her.

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<sup>475</sup> Springstroh, A., interview.

<sup>476</sup> Ortega, interview.

<sup>477</sup> Ortega, interview.

So much of Reyna's story relates to Alice's view of seeds as well.

I just feel like seeds are such obvious little miracles. They're just this speck of dirt or something; like this little pellet of deadness. I know it's just such a typical metaphor, but they're so amazing. It's this thing that can be sitting inert for years and years, you know, and then at the right moment, it just turns into this new life – and it's so small, and I can... again, it's like the name of our farm – I'm being so cliché, but I just feel like every seed is just a miracle.<sup>478</sup>

The miracle of these seeds is that from their death comes life. Without their death, seeds could not make their journey back into the earth.

Feeding and being fed, as Sarah puts it, is the Eucharistic theology shaping Abundant Table.<sup>479</sup> The seeds lead to the elements on the table. These are the same elements Teilhard discusses when he writes we are all part of the same Eucharist. The same seed keeps replanting itself. From death comes life, the process is eternal with all the parts being held together by doing work together in relationship in place in God. It is a choice to do this work for these women. Sure, I could take a part out of the model and just have relationship and place or place and God, but what remains would not be agricultural spirituality. The choice is, as Sarah says, choosing to “get up every morning to do the impossible and that's resurrection. It's the impossible thing that happened, that you never expected would happen but it happened. And so every Sunday we believe in the resurrection and every day we should believe in the resurrection.”<sup>480</sup> To Sarah, this means small-scale agriculture merging with Eucharist – the body and blood of Christ.

Here she explains it in her own words:

Our spirituality is very Eucharistic. I would say everyone [at Abundant Table] has a strong connection to understanding the elements on the table. That the bread, that the

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<sup>478</sup> McGary, interview.

<sup>479</sup> Nolan, interview.

<sup>480</sup> Nolan, interview.

wheat and the water and the wine and the grapes, that the very elements of the earth are what feed us to be kind of the elements of the earth for others. In that not only do we share the image of God and our relationship with Christ is looking at the image of, but Christ was born of a woman. So Christ was born of water and of soil and shares the same element that we all share and that connection is eternal and that's also what we remember each week when we break bread. It reminds of that deep connection.<sup>481</sup>

Herein lies the connection points of this dissertation – that agricultural spirituality is about the embodied work and practice of showing up to God, place, and relationship. In that work, seeds are planted for the purpose of the cycle of life, death, and resurrection to continue to restore the world around us. Hildegard understood this cycle of water, blood, and matter being life forces to reckon with, created by God. She contemplates Jesus on the cross having been speared and blood and water flowing out of his body. Her recommendation is for there to be those three elements on the Eucharist table each week – water, bread, wine – to represent the triune God and how we are connected to this web. Sarah's quote reminds me of the invitation to remember his death, but also his birth. He died with blood and water spilt, but he was born with blood and water spilt too.

The invitation to reexamine Eucharist is just one of the outcomes from examining these women's stories. Certainly, we need to examine the Eucharist in more ways than just bread and wine. The elements in today's day and age represent the seeds in the ground, the pollinators who assist their growth, the water so desperately sought, and the hands harvesting, transporting, and making the bread and wine. There are many different ecological liturgies and practices available to faith communities these days. However, when we engage the elements liturgically and Eucharistically, we are led to and need to understand the different kind of cross farmers and laborers bear. When the interaction of how relationships, place, and God factor in to the work is

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<sup>481</sup> Nolan, interview.

considered, there are issues and concerns – life and death issues – that must be grappled with in faith communities on a deeper level.

### Seed of Agricultural Spirituality

As the agricultural spirituality model merges in the center, the seed that is there cannot ignore the surrounding environment it is birthed into when it comes to relationship, place, and faith in God. If a seed is lucky to be birthed at one of the four farms in this study, it will know a spirituality in its life I can attest to of being morally considered with the partners all around it. The seed's life matters as do the lives animals, humans, and other plants alongside it. Its death also matters as do the deaths of the animals, humans, and other plants around it. No longer is the seed considered on a hierarchy, but is weighed on a web where it is seen, contemplated, and acted on behalf of to restore a broken system. It is part of resurrection too, as it must die to be reborn.

Farming is not a process that is easy nor will everyone live a thriving or long life. But every life is part of the process. For spirituality is not about thriving, but dwelling in reality and really seeing what is happening in all areas and relationships. In this, where the Spirit is moving, we are tasked with how to work for justice and mutuality in community. For long life is a privilege, as is the time to even discuss where our food comes from and how it arrives to the table. So many are not present in the conversation because of lives cut short and just needing to survive. This conversation should include them too. These farms seek to include the marginalized as they are rooted in tradition, discipline, practice, and bodies which seek to educate more people. Therefore, spirituality here does not end in contemplating, but in action. It is part of my mission to continue what they started. In the next chapter, which is the final chapter, I borrow from Alice's mentor's practice of roses, buds, and thorns, to shape a plan for



advocating for these farmers. In particular, what can the faith communities surrounding these farms do to better aid them and to seek resurrection and resilience in the food justice conversation in our nation today?

Agricultural spirituality brings together work, the Divine, relationship, and place as it seeks to invest in all areas of life, death, and resurrection. Agricultural spirituality holds the tension of a place with open hands seeking change, reconciliation, and transformation.

Agricultural spirituality is about resilience of a place, of relationships, of work because it is of God. This does not mean working towards utopia; rather, it means reminding ourselves of the importance of work. And to work for justice, peace, and advocacy for our neighbors is of vital consequence in this work. A robust spirituality like agricultural spirituality does not treat this aspect as an afterthought, but as a core value. In so many ways this replicates the values of a midwife who advocates for the birth plan of a mother and knows how to fight and nurture for the best birth, but she also knows when compromises must be made for the health of all parties. I would love to present a list of what values are primal, but the most primal is being present to the work at hand in all matters of relationship, place, and in faith with God. This is manifested in practice, in discipline, and in experience of a specific context. Therefore, the values come from each context. In a globalized world, starting in a specific context, with its margins, with its food supply, and with its members of the web is a strong and beneficial place to consider how to move forward. In other words – we start with the seed. Moving into the specifics of a place and its relationships then, it is important to have some principles to root in and the next chapter will provide a sense of that advocacy going forward.

## CONCLUSION

### Thorns, Roses, and Buds: Active Warnings and Hope

I am at the close of my first day on Mustard Seed Farm. The volunteer orientation is wrapping up. My body feels the weight of traveling late the night before, a baby kicking in my belly, and working in the fields. Alice gathers us at the end of the day to name our thorns, roses, and buds. My thorn is obvious to me – the weight of all I carry in getting to the farm and being six months pregnant, but the rose and bud overwhelm me. I see these women dive into the work that day. They are the roses I am grateful for as I will only be there a few days, but they will remain to work this land. The work of Mustard Seed is a bud, and it gives me hope. But as much as this dissertation is about me, it is also about disseminating these stories in order to advocate for these small farms to the extent they want. Each farm had their own thorns, buds, and roses in the form of issues they face and what kind of advocacy they want and/or seek. This chapter will lay out those thorns of warning and dismay and roses of gratitude. I will also offer buds of hope to help others connect their faith communities with food and agriculture in more robust ways. In a way, this conclusion presents not an end, but a sprout beginning to root into healthy soil. It is a seedling that will need help to see its growth flourish, but it could also just as easily be ignored and stamped out. The warnings are there, but so is the hope, and this chapter argues for choosing hope and action.

### Thorns

Of course, the farmers in this research understand and heed warnings and concerns. They all discuss a variety of thorns from climate change and drought to relating big agriculture to mega churches. The largest concerns overall are access to affordable land and maintenance,

shortage of volunteers and church engagement, lack of food education and awareness, and pesticide management. Some of the farms are stronger in certain areas, but overall these are the strongest issues presenting themselves.

Every interview highlights access to land for younger farmers being an issue. With the average age of US farmers approaching 60, this thorn is of vital importance. Judy stresses the value of being debt free and laments if they tried to start farming now they probably could not.<sup>482</sup> Sarah talks about Abundant Table needing land and how hard it is to find a place once a lease is up on the land they are using. She wonders if it is possible to convince farmers to not sell their land and put it in trusts or gift it to Abundant Table? “There’s lots of money in the pews” she tells me, “I feel strongly that they should be supporting farmers within their communities as much as they can whether [the farmers] are faith based or they’re not.”<sup>483</sup> (Coincidentally, right before this dissertation was done, they had to move their farm once again.) Alice’s farm is owned by her and her partner, but now she faces the growing costs of buildings in disrepair and prioritizing what needs to be fixed with a shrinking budget.<sup>484</sup> Louise owns her land as well, but is saddened there are not more young people who are able to do this work due to financial constraints.<sup>485</sup>

There is also a void of volunteer and church engagement. Abundant Table has good church partnerships in that the Episcopal Church supports what they do, but also sees how there

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<sup>482</sup> Springstroh, J., interview.

<sup>483</sup> Nolan, interview.

<sup>484</sup> McGary, interview.

<sup>485</sup> Hanna, interview.

could be more growth and interest in volunteer days.<sup>486</sup> Alice feels similarly, not understanding why it was hard for her fellow parish members to come to the farm for volunteer days or education events when it ties so well to the catholic church social teachings.<sup>487</sup> For Judy and Amber, their church feels too large to be invested. They do not know how it would work other than the potlucks and worship gatherings they already host.<sup>488</sup> Louise grieves for church building projects which prioritize more classroom space over gardens for kids or showers for the homeless.<sup>489</sup>

There is a sense, especially from the farms needing volunteers and participation like Mustard Seed and Abundant Table, that they are tired of the talking about justice and not seeing anything happen. This sentiment echoes Gebara's critique of liberation theology, too, as she laments it has been more theory than action. Advocacy for these farmers begins, then, with understanding their stories, contexts, and how to partner in the work of God, place, and relationship. Reyna wants more churches to preach on issues of land abuses and laborer rights. She deeply wants people to know their worth so they know their lives are worth fighting for in cases of abuse.<sup>490</sup> There are so many labor issues to come to terms with and advocate for such as understanding the risks women farm laborers face when they are pregnant in the fields. Other concerns include farmer suicide and the rape and abuse of women laborers. These are all issues faith communities need to understand, but also be moved to action. So many privileged

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<sup>486</sup> Nolan, interview.

<sup>487</sup> McGary, interview.

<sup>488</sup> Springstroh, A., interview; Springstroh, J., interview.

<sup>489</sup> Hanna, interview.

<sup>490</sup> Ortega, interview.

communities dedicate resources and time to their own families not eating processed foods and championing the labeling of GMO foods, but still the laborer's stories go untold. By telling these stories in faith communities and participating in the work at farms, more exposure and justice can only help these people. The silence only breeds thorns.

Lastly, pesticide awareness and farm education remain issues to confront. Alice turns to Practical Farmer's of Iowa and Pesticide Action Network for her knowledge while running inside when her neighbors spray.<sup>491</sup> Reyna remains vigilant on the abuse of pesticide drift and how it affects women and children, while Jeannette tries to implement natural pest controls where she can.<sup>492</sup> Abundant Table also runs a strong farm-to-school program which invites schools to visit the farm as well as does cooking and food education classes in schools and the community. Judy and Amber educate elementary school kids whose parents think dairies are dirty and gross.<sup>493</sup> Louise purged her farm of Round-up first thing after she bought her property and remains engaged with her land to see it run without conventional pesticides.<sup>494</sup>

These last thorns are a mixture of thorns and roses. These women are presenting their thorns, but also actively engaging in the work to dispel and fight these issues. The feeling of being tired in these issues was present thought, too, as they could not get everything done they wanted to do. However, they were all seen as champions in their communities. Was this because they were women? The gendered stories that presented themselves showcase that they receive more respect in their communities because they are women doing this work, as was mentioned

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<sup>491</sup> McGary, interview.

<sup>492</sup> Ortega, interview; Ban, interview.

<sup>493</sup> Springstroh, J., interview.

<sup>494</sup> Hanna, interview.

by Sarah, Louise, Alice, and Judy. Gender does not present itself as a barrier, but more so they are seen as capable of doing even more because they are women. Obviously, this presents its own issues and problems as Sarah so poignantly commented:

I go to a farm bureau meeting or some of the meeting that we are having, I'm often the youngest person in the room and one of a handful of women. I will leave the meeting feeling really well respected that people [say], "You're doing so much Sarah, that's so amazing what you're doing." And that makes me feel good. Then as I'm thinking about it, I'm like, "Wait, I'm the one that's working." Most of the men are gonna go home and not think twice about what's going on. And I'm actually the one developing the proposal or I'm sharing more of the weight of whatever it is that our group is doing because I depend on its success more than anyone else does because everyone else has a job, has family money, are older men, so they're established. My work is around my survival or around the survival of my community. In some way, and I do put some of that to being a female, to being a young adult in this era, not all of it, some of it is just where you were born and happened to land. But that is definitely – it's neat to connect with other women, but then having this ah-ha moment and that everyone's kind of celebrating it but then having this ah ha moment like, we're always working harder because our survival is different.<sup>495</sup>

The survival is different. From a spouse and father dying to moving land every couple years to immigrating as a child to living in a trailer in freezing conditions, they survived. All of these women face issues of survival because of the way gender is constructed in US society. Women are still expected to carry more than men in the form of work in and outside of the home. In historical accounts, women are written as the resilient ones in times of crisis, and it is still true of the accounts in this dissertation. As partnership is considered, bringing all genders to the table to discuss and act in how we can be resilient together is absolutely needed, and this starts by seeing who is carrying the survival of a community. Certainly, these stories have thorns, but their stories also have roses of advocacy we can look to for principles moving forward.

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<sup>495</sup> Nolan, interview.

## **Roses**

The roses here are not specific stories, but principles to root into when engaging in issues of agricultural spirituality. When it comes to place, relationships, and God, there are areas to engage, but how a local community does that is up to them. There are three roses here I would like to illustrate: Education, building relationships, and economic structures.

The way these farms all embrace education is powerful. They welcome elementary schools, and they work on issues of social justice and policy on and off the farms. They host a variety of events from picnics and concerts to lectures and retreats. When it comes to building relationships, they all welcome children in radical ways as well as people from all backgrounds and abilities. They are in relationship with the nonhuman community around them and value stewardship. Their relationship to work is one of living to work, not working to live. Their embracing of work in their bodies alongside other bodies is one of the most important cases made in the previous chapter. Lastly, their profound economic models are worth noting as they provide important examples of economies of local engagement. Mustard Seed Farm giving away produce, Abundant Table paying farmers a livable way, Springstroh Farm being debt free, and Luther Coffee Farm paying their manager 80% of the profit are all rare and amazing models of equitable financial structures we can learn from. Those lessons may not translate directly if we are not paying a staff or growing food, but it does beckon buds of hope for learning how we can think about economics and food differently as well as being in relationship with more small- to medium-scale farms.

## **Buds**

The buds of hope, advocacy, and action, then, stem from these thorns and roses. They want the church and faith institutions to know their struggles, but also that the relationships

cannot be one-sided. As Reyna desires, so do I want the church to educate on teachings of social justice and farming on a larger scale. No longer can the conversation be stopped at a Wendell Berry reading. That might be a starting place, but it must press congregations to engage with farmer and laborer issues, pesticide abuses, and access to land. Incidentally, faith institutions are one of the largest owners of land. What would it mean to look at a field of grass differently? Perhaps with a food-justice mindset? Could the lawn be reinvented to feed people? Employ people? The point is the issues must be preached from pulpits, but also move into the communities. Certainly, there are churches doing this work, but they are the exception, not the rule. After all, the church is not a building; the church is its people. In that, this is not about converting anyone, but caring for each other – all members of an ecosystem in relational ways. This is spiritual work.

Further, examining the reality of how much we pay for food and how much farmers are paid is an issue religious congregations can discuss and participate in as well. There are creative ways faith communities can engage economic structures when it comes to farming and food. Considering how to support farmers in the community could be as simple as becoming a CSA drop off site or hosting an event where farmers gather and talk about their faith. Other paths of engagement include paying more for our food from people who need the support, adopting a farmer as part of the mission of the church to support them financially, and gifting land to form a farm or garden. Continuing with using spaces creatively to host tours, picnics, concerts, and retreats is needed. Remaining open to these events as well as building more collaborations could teach stewardship and the importance of labor to people. Of course, the farmers are busy with their own jobs, so this comes at a cost for someone being able to be a liaison in a faith



community with a farm. But religious communities have long histories of supporting missions and justice causes in their denominations.

Traditionally in faith communities, food advocacy has been limited to programs like canned food drives and passing out premade food to the homeless. While these are important entry points, stopping there with programming is robbing people of experiences and nutrients, not to mention spiritual engagement, with the web of life. Engaging with programs and education that bring attention to these issues and help solve the problems are not only about fighting for justice, but are spiritual matters as well. Spirituality is not just about seeing the beautiful connections, but the pain, too. The Spirit is present in all situations as was explained in a panentheistic view of the world. As awareness grows of the issues of injustice, it is important to bring tools of reconciliation and advocacy by partnering in these places of pain.

Ultimately, this conversation is about pushing the margins of engagement. Our food system is becoming a monopoly as more small farms opt for selling their land to conglomerates. Once a farm gets so big, it is impossible to know all the moving parts happening on thousands of acres. The practical theology solutions of shopping local and eating organic mentioned in chapter one simplify what is happening in farming communities and the labor issues small farms and migrant workers face on larger farms. It may seem political to get involved with Interfaith Power and Light or the Pesticide Action Network, but these are the mission fields of our present day. Retrofitting light bulbs is one act. Another is understanding our food is sprayed with chemicals and in those fields, people are being exploited too. Seeing people and understanding their stories means learning about more than the labels on one's food. Like Judy said, people's concern when they visit the farm is that they are giving their cows antibiotics and that the dairy is dirty. But

when they see the farm, they understand the cows are well taken care of and the space is clean.<sup>496</sup>

What is needed is the telling of these stories and inspiring awareness and action over and over again.

Being witnesses in this day means more than observing God's acts on Sunday mornings. We need more spaces to witness the Spirit moving amidst the earth. Farms are excellent places for sacred experiences and meeting God in the soil, animals, and plants. Partnering with farmers in radical ways is a bud. Resurrecting labor and manual work as important vocations is absolutely needed in a day and age where those who do this work are looked down upon and segregated. Connections to farms, even one farm, is of vital importance as the rural/urban divide grows in our political climate. We need to learn about our neighbors, in the soil, in our ecosystem, and in our communities. Everyone and thing matters, but those whose stories have not been told need to be weighed differently right now. Listening to those whose stories have not been heard matters most, but what might matter more is working next to them more than even listening. For spirituality is not immobile, it is active and compassionate. Saint Brigit showed us this and we can continue her work even now.

The merging of faith communities and agriculture can be a symbiotic relationship. A connection of this sort speaks to God's will being done on earth as it is in heaven. Agricultural spirituality invokes the elements of farming, practical theology, and spiritual formation. It invites an embracing of Merchant's partnership ethics and a model of a midwife to embody the work going forward. It also is aware of how the Divine is working in the web of life for justice and reconciliation. The work of life, death, and resurrection is never done. It is an ongoing process, not a theory or ladder to climb. Coincidentally, one may learn more from digging in the soil and

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<sup>496</sup> Springstroh, J., interview.

planting seeds than sitting on mountaintops or in pews. One may learn more from birthing and dying than living, but hopefully birthing and dying lead to living differently.

### **Conclusion: The Beginning**

I open my eyes at midnight to see the doctor sitting in my hospital room. Strike that – it is my son’s hospital room. He is two weeks old. *We are back in the hospital.* His birth was as close to perfect as far as Cesarean sections can go. I needed to deliver him early after developing a condition that made me itch all over and can be threatening to the baby. But he was fine. Then he developed his first cold and started breathing fast. The normal breathing rate for an infant is 20-50 breaths per minute. Shepherd (the name we gave him) is breathing at 60-100 breaths per minute. Words fly by me like “Cystic Fibrosis,” “Enlarged heart,” and “Aspirating fluid in his lungs.” For my part, I still have an open wound above my pelvis. I pack it with gauze as it still bleeds from time to time. The doctor sits in the chair staring at Shep. She turns and whispers to me, “We just can’t figure this out. I’m hoping he is one of those kids who just grows out of it.” Her words are not comforting, although I hope for healing with her.

Part of me paused and died in the two weeks we were in Huntington Hospital and then transferred to Children’s Hospital of Los Angeles. I wanted a sweet postpartum time of snuggling my newborn and being at home adjusting. Instead I stared at this new creature lying in a metal crib hooked up to all kinds of wires. I could not heal the way I wanted, breastfeed the way I wanted, or be with my children the way I wanted. It was not natural, but it was needed. In the end after going home and enduring months of exams and doctor’s visits, he was diagnosed with sleep apnea that did indeed end up clearing up on its own.

I tell this story because in this time, I recalled the stories of the women who met this child in my belly. I was not owed a perfect birth or even a healthy child. What a privileged world I live

in where that is the norm – not for all, I realize. I recalled Reyna’s daughter born with Down’s Syndrome. I remembered Judy recollecting the death of her husband, and Alice’s wonder and anguish if she wanted children. I cried thinking of Louise birthing her baby to give him up for adoption. I thought of them in their bodies carrying their children or working with children. They faced their deaths so many times in their stories and were reborn stronger. This strength did not translate into success in Western terms. They did not gain more land or profit. They did not exponentially grow more food or invent a new way of doing agriculture. But in their rebirth, they leaned more into their relationships, more into the Spirit and their traditions, and more into their work and land.

In those dark moments of doctors’ confusion and no answers, of feeling the loneliest I ever have in my life, I knew I would be reborn. But I had to die. I had to die to my dreams and the dreams of this child that were mine and not his. His story started this way, but he will not be defined by it. The same is true of my journey of motherhood and even this dissertation. I could let the darkness kill me, or I could be reborn in it. What I was reborn into was a new understanding of God, place, and relationships and the work of life, death, and resurrection in each season.

When I was eating hospital food, probably frozen on a truck hours before I ate it, I could not help but think of how we treat the sick and what we feed the sick; of how we birth and what we expect of mothers all over the globe. I thought of how isolated all sections of our society are – church, hospital, farm, school, home, groceries, work. I thought about this research and seeds of something new. How these women were not doing anything new, but how the stories they were telling were new in many ways. They were stories of rebirth, of finding their calling in

work alongside relationships, place, and God. They were thriving and surviving as well as facing their deepest fears and deaths many times over.

My point is that this model of agricultural spirituality is one that is not located solely on a farm or any other specific place. The integration of the model moves with each place and body and joins and bumps into more of these circles as it moves through the world. The model provides a lens of awareness to notice these connections and the process of life, death, and resurrection no matter where one is. Adoption of this model means embracing ways of being, seeing, listening, and acting more than pontificating and theorizing.

What matters in the end, which consequently is the beginning, is that these stories are all seeds of resurrection. Seeds of spirituality whose experiences matter and need to be told, nourished, and exemplified, so others see *these women* as models as much as the advocates, farmers, and theologians before them. They are radical in so many ways of not leaving their worries among their thorns, but doing the work of growing roses and nurturing buds of hope for us to learn. Taking the model of agricultural spirituality and being its midwife now is my job. My work is to share these stories and my own, to teach that death does not have the last word and to work for resurrection. The way life will change is to embrace birth and death as more than onetime events and share these experiences, not just in words, but in actions.

To conclude, my case is that to understand agricultural spirituality, it does help if we are connected to a farm or a place where food is grown, but at least let us be connected to our food. Food, for all kinds of organisms, is everywhere. Understanding this helps to see that agricultural spirituality does make sense on a farm, but can make sense anywhere too. If we are willing to understand place differently and as more connected, food could be grown anywhere. Indeed, we must be more creative about food sources considering so much global change is ahead of us. But

these farmers are taking creativity seriously and encouraging all of us to think creatively too, for the sake of all members of the web of life. If faith institutions and communities take these buds of creativity seriously, there could be a transformation of societies and their nourishment – both biologically and spiritually. If these stories can be the seeds to start demonstrating what resurrection can mean in this era, then hope can continue to root, grow, and expand in radical ways.

What spiritual history shows us and practical theology stated when it comes to agricultural spirituality is that place and our embodied experiences matter: on a farm, in a school, even in a hospital. Transformation occurs with relational seeing of the Incarnation. We need contemplation and justice partnered now more than ever. The ethical framework of ecofeminism helps here as it reminds us of the need to root in real situation and relationships – not fiction; where sound management and equity coupled with moral consideration for all matter. Finally, being a midwife who can educate, nurture, monitor, and advocate is the persona we should look to in embodying the practice of agricultural spirituality – for women and men.

This dissertation argues for the inclusion of more agriculture and faith stories demonstrated by the strong farms represented here. They illustrate what agricultural spirituality lived out looks like as they practice it every day. They are the midwives living out this application. They know this is not about doing the work perfectly. Rather, they embody a vocation where labor is deeply valued and honoring the lives and deaths of the bodies around them is important. Understanding the process of life, death, and resurrection is key as they do not believe in a utopian solution to farming where everyone is vegetarian and certain pesticides or killing of animals will disappear. They are connected to the other bodies and see their value wrapped up in these connections rather than profit margins and production tables. While they

cannot not worry about production and profit, those elements are not the driving force. The force rather, is the spirit of their work, the spirit of the Divine, of place, of relationship beckoning them to dedicate themselves to something deeper in the soil. These narratives and experiences are seeds of birth, of life, of death, and ultimately of resurrection, rooting into local communities where they can face their desires and devastations and still thrive and hope for what they are supposed to be, while teaching others. Agricultural spirituality is a seed holding a world unto itself and in need of a world to root into; now it just needs its partners to grow and flourish.<sup>497</sup>

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<sup>497</sup> Partnerships begin by looking for places to publish articles from material in this dissertation and eventually a book. I will submit articles to the following academic journals: *Zygon*, *Spiritus*, *Feminist Theology*, *Theology Today*. I will also consider the following publishers: New Society Publishers (Gabriola Island, BC, Canada), Baker Academic (Ada, MI), Praeger an Imprint of ABC-CLIO, Inc. (Santa Barbara, CA), Chelsea Green Publishing Company (White River Junction, VT), Orbis Books (Maryknoll, NY), Baylor University Press (Waco, TX), Food First, (Oakland, CA) Chalice Press (St. Louis, MO).

## Appendix A

### Informed Consent

*Dissertation Research:  
Narrative Inquiry of Women Running Faith-based Farms  
in the United States and the Advocacy They Seek*

### PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT

You (participant) are being invited to voluntarily participate in a doctoral dissertation study conducted by Kristin Ritzau (researcher), the main researcher listed above. You are being asked to participate since you meet the requirements for enrollment into this study.

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of participants' experiences as owners/ main operators of four different faith-based farms. Through partnering with you in action and awareness, the research will substantially contribute to the discourse of spiritual formation in practical theology concerning environmental issues facing the US. Further, the stories told will bring more women's voices to the agricultural discussion in the US and in churches around the nation in order to assist with advocacy work on behalf of the farmers. The desire is to create more spiritual narratives of healing for the ecological issues that our world is facing.

**Voluntary participation and commitment:** The research will be conducted on four different farms between February 2016 and March 2017. From March to June 2016, the participants are being asked to participate in a minimum three-day visit by the researcher of their farm and then be available, as their schedule permits, for follow-up questions and approvals during the course of the research by email, telephone, or mail. Participation in this research is voluntary and persons who consent to participate may choose to conclude their involvement in the project at any point without penalty. Currently, there is no compensation for this project. Researcher will provide own meals and accommodations or reimburse participants for meals and lodging if offered.

**Procedure:** The participant is being invited to allow the researcher to visit their farm for a three to five-day visit during March through June 2016. The participant will take part in a one-on-one interview with the researcher lasting approximately two hours. The participant will be asked a series of open-ended questions relating to her experience of establishing the farm and personal spiritual journey as it relates to the work on the farm. This information will be recorded on an electronic voice recorder to be transcribed and analyzed for the researcher's dissertation. All transcriptions will be sent to the participants for their feedback and clarification. Additional emails or phone interviews may take place during the course of the year of research if further information is needed from the researcher at the convenience of the participant's schedule.

Additionally, the researcher will be allowed by the participant to tour the farm and see the practices happening on a daily basis. If allowed, the researcher would like to participate in farm chores and labor while visiting. Photographs and short films may be taken with the permission of the participant. Public materials will also be collected at the consent of the participant. These materials include website shots, blogs, brochures and available literature on the farm, Facebook pages, and Twitter feeds. All information which ends up being used for the researcher's study will be sent for final approval of use by the participant before the report is published.

### Possible benefits and risks:

Benefits for participants engaging in this research include the process of diving into their own stories about how faith and the earth are connected in their experiences that they would like to disseminate to a larger audience and body of knowledge. Furthermore, being part of developing a theological narrative and advocacy work around women in farming could be invigorating and beneficial to the field of work they are invested in. Using the narrative generated from the research could also enhance the work they are already doing by providing a vocabulary and spirituality which does not exist in the arenas of theology and ecology. The work resulting from the research can be used in participants' own communities and congregations as well as a broader lens of women's advocacy work in agriculture.



Additionally, if the participants wish that their farms be mentioned by name, the attention received from being involved in the study could benefit their CSA membership, farm donations, and visitations, if desired, from people invested in the areas of theology, ecology, and spiritual formation.

The risk assessment at this time is no more than minimal. Questions will be asked by the researcher in an open-ended format. Questions will revolve around participants' faith journeys as well as their view of work on the farm. Inquiries will be made into how their faith, religion, and particular denomination tie into the work of the farm as well as the advocacy work they would like help with. Questions may cause participants to think of their own faith journeys had not considered before. If at any time a question or topic makes the participant feel uncomfortable, the participant does not need to answer or may ask to move on. The interview may be stopped or paused if the participant does not wish the interview to continue. All participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. After the interview, the participant will be able to contact the researcher if he or she wishes to remove an answer and/or after reading through the transcript would like her response to be off the record or altered.

In light of this risk, the researcher can offer a resource list of pastors, priests, spiritual directors, and therapists in the area who could address concerns which surface for them. At this time compensation will not be provided to the participants if this is needed.

If allowed to take photos and videos, and there is something the participant would not like photos or videos taken of, they may express their desire at the visit or ask that a certain photo not be used after the visit when follow-up approvals are being sought by the researcher. However, once the report is finalized, the rights of the photographs and films will be owned by the researcher.

Another risk is the potential attention if a participant or farm is identified in the study if you desire to remain anonymous. Precautions will be taken such as changing the name of the farm to a region (i.e. Midwest, West Coast), changing the names of the farmers in the study, and pictures and videos will not be used to assure confidentiality if participants wish for their identities to remain anonymous. If the farm owner wishes the farm to remain anonymous, the farmer's names will be changed as well to assure anonymity of the farm. If there are threats of any nature or the farm feels in danger by anyone who obtains information from the dissertation, the researcher will connect the participant to local law enforcement and community advocates who may be able to help them.

**Confidentiality:** Information collected on this visit will be audio recorded for transcription on a locked electronic file. Photos and videos will also be kept on a locked computer. When the transcript, written data, and reports are typed for the project, the name of the participant and the farm will be changed, if the participant desires, to assure anonymity to the best of the researcher's ability. Farm names will be replaced with fictitious names and participant's names will be replaced as well. Additionally, the locations of each farm will be generalized to a national region, (i.e. Midwest, West Coast) or another generic name, so as to not pinpoint the location of the farm if the farm owner does not want to be located. A transcript will be provided to the participant a month to three months after the visit as will the final written report prior to final deadlines at which point if there is information the participant does not wish to be shared, they may then let the researcher know what they wish to clarify or strike from the record.

Please check one (You may change your decision until January 2017, after which your decision will be set for publication in the dissertation).

☐ As a participant in this study, it is my desire to remain anonymous and have my name and farm name changed for the duration for the study.

☐ As a participant in this study, I wish to have my name and farm name and location published in this study, as permitted by the owner/deed or title holder of the farm.

**Data storage and sharing:** All information given on the recording, the transcription, and any additional materials collected from the farm will be confidentially stored in a locked file on the researcher's computer and recording device. Back up files will all be stored in a password-protected Dropbox account as well as password-protected hard drive at the researcher's house.

All transcripts of the interview, both written and recorded, photos, and other data collected, will remain on a password-protected hard drive indefinitely unless the participant desires the data be destroyed and erased six months after the dissertation is finalized. The written report with names changed (if desired) will remain on the researcher's computer in a locked file. The final

report will be shared with the researcher's dissertation committee and a broader national audience at conferences once approved for publication. If the dissertation is to be turned into a book, permission will be sought after at that time. If the material is used for any future different projects, publications, or further research, permission will be sought to use it again.

☐ As a participant in this study, I will allow the data to be held by the researcher after the study indefinitely.

☐ As a participant in this study, I wish all of the data outside of the final report to be destroyed six months after the dissertation is published.

**Contact information:** If at any point the participant has questions about the project or research, his or her rights, in the event of problems arising as a result of the research, or wishes to withdraw from the project, contact Kristin Ritzau at 805-259-8479 or at [kristin.ritzau@cst.edu](mailto:kristin.ritzau@cst.edu). If the participant wishes to contact the supervising faculty for this project, Dr. Frank Rogers, Jr. he can be reached at 909-447-2569 or [frogers@cst.edu](mailto:frogers@cst.edu).

This study has been reviewed by Claremont School of Theology Institutional Review Board and the study number is 2016-12. If you have questions about your rights or are dissatisfied at any time with any part of this study, you can contact, anonymously if you wish, the chair of the Institutional Review Board by phone at (909) 447-6344 or email at [irb@cst.edu](mailto:irb@cst.edu).

**Consent:** If you are satisfied with your understanding of the information in this document and agree to participate in this research project, please sign and date both copies of the form; one is for the participant, the other for the researcher.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Participant print name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Researcher print name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## Appendix B

### Participant Interview Questions

1. How did you come to start this farm? What is the history of the farm?
2. How were you influenced to do this work?
3. What does a daily/weekly routine look like on the farm?
4. What is your experience with your land/surroundings? Animals?
5. What is your experience with your local community?
6. What is your experience of being a woman in the field of agriculture in the U.S.?
7. What is the connection of faith to your farm? Is this work connected to God/Spiritual/faith to you? If so, how?
8. What do you perceive as a problem or an issue in your community that needs to be addressed?
9. How does said problem/issue (see #8) relate to your life? To the community's life?
10. Why do these issues/problems exist? What can we do about them?
11. What do we need to know? What do we already know?
12. What resources do we need to proceed with advocacy and awareness?
13. Who would you want to be informed of your work and the issues/problems?
14. How best would your community receive information on how to help?
15. How does your faith affiliation help or hinder the problem/issues at stake? What roles/where would you want your faith affiliation to assist you?

## Appendix C

### A Recipe from Each Farm

On each farm, I sat for meals that were cooked for me. Sharing food was not only hospitable, but an inviting way to let our guards down and learn more about each other. The practice of cooking goes right along with growing food, so here I offer a recipe shared with me from every farm.

#### **Judy's Mini Cheesecakes**

12 vanilla wafers  
 16 oz softened cream cheese  
 ½ cup sugar  
 1 tsp vanilla  
 2 eggs  
 Toppings: Cherry pie filling or jam or fruit

Line muffin tin with paper cups after spraying the bottom. Add a wafer to each cup. Mix cream cheese, vanilla and sugar. Then mix in eggs. Pour in cups and back at 325 for 25 minutes or until toothpick is clean. Top with toppings of choice.

#### **Louise's Lemon Kale Pesto**

Mix the following in food processor:

3-4 cloves of garlic  
 large handful of Kale, boiled for 4 minutes.  
 1 cup lemon juice  
 zest of 2 lemons  
 5 tablespoons oil  
 ¾ cup grate Parmesan or Ramona cheese  
 salt and pepper to taste  
 Mix with warm penne pasta

#### **Abundant Table Curry**

2 tablespoons olive or coconut oil  
 1 large squash, peeled and diced  
 2-3 diced carrots  
 1 medium chopped onion  
 1 14 oz. can garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed  
 1 16 oz. jar of curry simmering sauce (this was Trader Joes brand)  
 Rice to serve

In a large soup pot, sauté all vegetables in oil until they begin to brown and the onion is translucent. Pour curry sauce over vegetables and bring to boil, then simmer until carrots and squash are cooked. Add beans. Serve over rice

### **Alice's Fresh Herb Omelet**

1 cup fresh seasonal herbs (basil, sorrel, cilantro, etc).

6 eggs

2 spring onions or one small onion

1 tablespoon butter or oil

Salt and pepper

Chop onions and herbs. Crack and stir eggs in a bowl. Sauté onions in butter or oil until translucent. Add herbs and sauté only briefly. Remove from heat. In another small sauté or omelet pan, pour eggs in and allow them to fill the circle of the pan. Before the eggs set completely, spoon the onions and herb mixture onto one side of eggs. Cook one more minute. Season with a bit of salt and pepper. Fold the empty half of the eggs over the onions and herbs and place on plate.

## Appendix D

## Data from In Vivo Coding

Color	Comment	Document name	Code	Begin	End	Segment
●	Even though Catholic Worker Movement not a church, identifying it as a religious association in this context	Alice	Role of church	112	112	You know, and again, it's philosophical, and it's not, like, a money-saving strategy. Again, it's part of this, like, this [50:00] Catholic Worker idea of, like, you know, what if we work because work was meaningful. And, what if we worked because we wanted to, like, be a positive force in the world... and what if we all were doing that? What if that was what our economics was about, and it was about competition and exchange of currency, but just about, like – so, it's this Gift-Economy model. And yeah, I have no idea if it's gonna work, and it's like, yeah... it's not gonna kill me to try. Maybe it is! I don't know, but, yeah. I think it's worth trying.

- Alice      Role of church      120      122      I think we have a really good local community. I mean, I am sometimes puzzled by my church community, but I think that, I could be a better member of my church. And then, maybe my relationship with... I think that, yeah, I think that if I had a catastrophe – my church community would really be there for me.

KR: And this is what church?

A: This... well, so, my church has temporarily moved. There's a Catholic church about three miles away. And it's an awesome church – really it's a very active, very ... active church. And I think that if I was really involved in my church, I'd be really involved in my church. I would be, like... I think that, they are really active in the things that they do for each other, and for the church. And in a few outreach places that they've always done – like, I think that. And... yeah. They're very Catholic. I think I've tried to be like, "Let's get the youth group to, like, go do a service project." You know, or like, "come do a service overnight at our farm..." and the like, social justice learning thing. And they're like – "we're gonna go to Dubuque and visit, like, you know... holy places..." or I don't know – they're just – "we're gonna go visit the elderly" – they're great. You know, I was like, "let's do, like a, adult religious education class and let's do the Just Faith program." And like, you know – I don't know if you know the Just Faith program, but it's really really awesome curriculum about faith and justice. And they're like, "that's a great idea to do like a..." and then they're like, "well, the priest recommended this, like, seven weeks on, like, you know Catholicism basics..." or, like, whatever it was, I was like, "I have no interest in that." It's like, I don't want to learn about, like, the catechism. If you wanna learn about... Let's learn about, like, the social justice teachings of the Catholic Church! Like, they're super rich and amazing! But I don't want to learn about the sacraments. So, anyway, I could be a better member of my church. And I haven't even... so they moved their... they moved to Story City, so I can't walk to church. And I haven't been to church since they, their re-...like, they're doing a big construction thing on the church, so it's going to be like a year, I think, that my church is meeting seven miles away instead of three miles away. And that's a big... difference. So, not walking seven miles. And it starts at eight o'clock instead of eight thirty...

- Alice Role of church 145 146 he didn't have a problem with every Catholic Worker House, he just didn't want it to be part of our name. And, so it's not, still it's not in our name, but we are now, like on... I mean, we were printing the Catholic Worker Farmer paper before we started our farm. So it wasn't like we weren't affiliated with the Catholic Worker movement – we were still like, but... anyway. But, he has a absolutely valid – and it was a - I think it was an important debate and it's still, it still is relevant. The word "catholic" if you're not Catholic... the word, "catholic" does not necessarily make you feel better. You know, "catholic" means "universal". I mean, you know it, it's - as word - it's not inherently offensive. But, that's not what anybody thinks – and maybe it is offensive because, like, the Catholic Church is Catholic 'cause they think they are the universal church.

But, "catholic" with a small "c", means, like, including everyone. But, lots of people have perfectly valid reasons to not like the Catholic Church. And, you know, and the Catholic church has done terrible things in the past, and terrible things in the recent future and I'm sure is doing terrible things right now. And they have done them as individuals, as parishes, as priests, and as structurally – they've done terrible things. But, the Catholic church has also done amazing things throughout it's history and I think of the Catholic church as the people. Anyway, and the Catholic faith which I think is not perfect, but I think is much more exciting than the religious institution. Though, I have to say I'm a little [1:10:00] bit of a fan of our current Pope and I'm, like, really happy that we have a cool Pope that I feel like is doing a much better job of, well, being a Catholic [KR laughing], and of, like, of helping our church be better. So, I'm excited about that.
- Alice Role of church 147 147 But anyway, so the Catholic Worker movement is not part of the Catholic church, in the... See, well, the Catholic church is also weird. See, I don't know...so, like, the Catholic church has a Pope. And then there's Bishops, then like Archbishops, and there's priests. And this is all sort-of in this some sort-of system that looks like towns, and states, and countries, and .... It's in a very hierarchical thing. And then there are other things within – there are orders – there are religious orders where there's brothers and sisters and fathers... So, there are people that can be a priest that aren't a priest of the... [KR: Catholic Church]. Well, they're still a priest of the Catholic Church, but they're like... they were ordained as a Franciscan as [KR: Dominican, yeah] opposed to like Diocesan person which is like, just like... [KR: Totally] ... so, in each of those orders, like, their order answers to the Pope, but not to all these other people. But they also have lots of freedom, but the Catholic Worker movement is not any of those things. It is, so, like, there's Catholic Charities which is also like this organization that is, like, answerable to the official Catholic Church.



●	Alice	Role of church	148	150	<p>The Catholic Worker movement is a movement that was inspired by the Catholic Social teachings. So, it was started by some Catholics and it was meant as like a... it was sort-of like – We’re excited about worker issues, and we’re excited about Catholic Social teaching and we’re trying to, like, reach out to workers about Catholic social teaching. And we’re trying to reach out to Catholics about worker issues and Catholic social teaching. And ... and then, like, we’re starting this movement, which is basically anarchist that, like, every house is basically autonomous, but these are our founding values and principles. So these are like they’re... So, every worker house, has decided to be a Catholic Worker. And so, has basically said, like, “we agree with the unifying principles of the Catholic Worker movement, and we want to affiliate ourselves with other Catholic Workers.”</p> <p>KR: And then that goes to a different... So you’re communing with other Catholic Worker movements... but not necessarily the church.</p> <p>A: Right, and so in each place these communities are navigating ... so there’s like a Mennonite worker in Minneapolis, and there’s... I think... well anyway – there’s like a Quaker house ... so, like, some of the Catholic Worker houses have different religious affiliations. Most of them are not, like, a hundred percent Catholic. Our community is definitely not a hundred percent Catholic. And yeah, they are not answerable in any way to the Bishop. There’s no, like, there’s no movement of funds in any way – like... yeah... and there’s no way, like, the New York Catholic Worker was kinda the first Catholic Worker – and they’ve got some say – that’s like, where Dorothy Day lived and where Peter Maurin lived – and they’ve got some authority in sort-of – the respect sense, but, like... if there was another Catholic Worker that was being, like, way outta line, you know, and just doing all sorts of violent things and maybe, like building nuclear weapons – let’s say... [KR: Sure] like, really un-catholic worker... New York Catholic Worker could not stop them from being a Catholic Worker.</p>
●	Alice	Role of church	156	156	<p>mmm-hmmm. And the Catholic Workers – at least in the Midwest – the get together a lot. You now, like, we – every Fall we have a retreat for two or three - or this year – four days, and it’s like kind of a fun retreat with you know... and then in the Spring we usually have a Faith and Resistance Retreat. So this year, it’s like – that one is in a different place every year and it’s usually on a different issue and we usually do some sort of civil disobedience, and this year was in Minneapolis with “Black Lives Matter”. And then, there’s been farm gatherings in the Winters – like, every few years and we have been doing craft retreats in the winter when smaller groups get together and learn crafts and make things. Yeah, so, I feel like – and we write for each others’ papers, and, anyway... I think that it means a lot to me that we are part of the Catholic Worker movement.</p>

●	Alice	Role of church	168	168	I feel like every church group should be able to be like, “That doesn’t seem right... I don’t think that was, like, God’s plan for, like, our stewardship of creation.” I feel like all these sixty-year-old farm-men, you know, if they were really, like, looking at that... would be like, “Does this give me joy?” “Is this what I love about my life as a farmer?” “Is this how I want to steward God’s creation?” You know, would they go talk to their pastors and be like, “I feel so good about all the pesticides I use.” I just don’t know what it would take for people to be able to say, like, I don’t... yeah, like, if it’s legislation so that this is, like, everybody could see what’s really happening, or like if it’s actually, like, people actually getting in trouble and paying big fines, like, if it drifted and killed things.
●	Alice	Role of church	181	181	I actually feel like he’s been putting out lots of inspiring literature, and saying lots of inspiring things, and doing lots of inspiring things about issues I really care about. And yeah, bringing social teachings back into the center of the faith, and, you know, setting aside – pushing more to the side – a lot of these questions of personal morality – I think – sexual morality – this personal judging of other people and ranking of people, and being, like [1:30:00] that’s not at all, like, what should be at the center of our... we should be talking about justice and personally, like, being caring. Instead of personally judging. So, I just feel, I don’t know... I feel good about it. I feel like he’s been taking lost of bold actions. I feel like, I would love it if all Catholics were taking lots of bold actions and stepping out of their own comfort zone and everybody else’s comfort zone... and anyway... So, I mean, I’m sure he could do more... But I...
●	Alice	Role of church	188	188	It’s like sneaking – it’s sneaking into everything – and it’s just a huge, huge deal. And I think that’s something that the Catholic Worker Movement is trying to be courageous about but definitely, we could be doing a better job – as a movement. My faith community – like my – my church community I really wish that they were doing more. And, I... maybe, I... maybe it’s arrogant, but I feel like it would be really good for my church community to be working with us more. I think that... I think that the... what we are doing as a farm is a great, like... it’s really accessible for the people at our church. It’s really accessible to be, like, we are going to do physical work to help grow really good food so that people who need it are able to have it. I feel like it’s a really basic concept. It’s really okay if you’re into charity, if you’re like “I do good by helping people who are really less fortunate than me...” I feel like that’s a really easy concept for them.

●	Alice	Role of church	189	189	But I also feel like when you dig deeper into what we believe and what we're trying to do, that it is such a rich terrain of theological, and political, and economic sort-of, like, 'meat' that you can dig into and it's not just like – oh... we're... I don't know... we have... "We're wealthy and these people are poor and we're gonna be nice to them." It's about dignity, and equality, and you know, like, we all need things from each other and we all have things to give. And I know how to grow vegetables! I love growing vegetables! And I really believe that you can't... It's like, having good food is sort-of fundamental to being able to function at your full potential as a person. And, like, everybody has the right to eat good food. And so, like, I'm doing my part to, like, make that happen and, but like, these people that I'm sharing food with – they share all these things with me – or they share things with other people! It's not like I'm better than them, and I feel sorry for them. I don't know, I guess I just feel like it could be really good for people at our church to be involved with what we're doing.
●	Alice	Role of church	191	191	you know, like, they rarely come to any of our public events, or our discussions, or to our work days. And part of it is, maybe I'm not on top of it enough to get things in the bulletin on time – but even when things are there – like, we have big events and you know, nobody from my church comes. And like, they all know me, and yeah... It's a little puzzling. But, I feel like, definitely... and I've spoken to a couple of the education classes. Like, the religious education classes. I would love it if some of the younger folks came out here and did like a work day or a overnight, like, I feel like would be really fun – like a camp out and sing some songs and, you know, go take some food to the food pantry and then like, talk about... I don't know. Read about Jesus... I mean, I don't know, but... yeah.
●	Alice	Role of church	192	192	Or even, another thing that is even more baffling – the college students in Ames who are part of the – that campus church – which we are also fairly connected to and how hard it is to get, like, a group of them to come to anything that we're doing, or... I was going to go with them to the last – the Faith and Resistance Retreat that was in Des Moines - and then, when they found out... They thought that they were going to go to the Des Moines Catholic Worker to help the poor, and then they found out that actually the time they were scheduled to go was during the Faith and Resistance Retreat, and their youth leader was planning on them going to the Faith and Resistance Retreat but didn't ... they didn't really know that was what was going to happen – they all backed out. They're like, "We don't wanna talk about drones... and help the poor..." They were like, "We only wanna help the poor, but we don't wanna talk about drones." [laughter + KR: oookay...] So, anyway. I don't know. . . Maybe if I was more charismatic, or more organized, or had more time some of these connections would be stronger. But...
●	Louise2	Role of church	96	96	And so, the day was redeemed, just by trying to keep that flow going between us. So, those are my most memorable interactions. So, yeah... Church not so good, but the beach is great! (said laughing).

●	Louise2	Role of church	129	129	At this point in time. We are Lutherans. And we've learned that we really are Lutherans. For Bob and I, we will often go to church in Volcano National Park, by ourselves, rather than going to town to the church. We kind of flow back and forth in those two (2) realms. It turns out for us – Bob being really a very private person, that the reason that we will go to church is more mystical. The liturgy provides a mystical feed for us. And that same mystical feed exists in the nature. And, and for me at this point in time, it's more strongly in the nature. Some... a lot of people go for community. That's one of the reasons for organized church. And we have not found that community – in the congregations here. And the problem is the distance. Almost more than anything. And, there are other things too. But one can be inside a community... I... gosh, they're not connected. That going to that community and being a part of this community is disjointed.
●	Louise2	Role of church	129	129	or a while I was doing the prison ministry at the church and that was very overwhelming. 'Cause it was mostly native Hawaiian families who had loved ones in prison, in Arizona. Because we don't have a Federal prison facility on this island. And Honolulu is overcrowded. So, our felons go to Arizona. And they actually have their own wing – that are native Hawaiians, and they feed them rice instead of potatoes. And I found it extremely rewarding to be with that community. So, that was once a month. What we had was video conferencing at the church. And so, it was arranged between the prison and the county here. And so, we would greet them, and then we were responsible for timing - their visits. And sometimes, and they're... they would... they're very family-oriented – it's a society that's very family oriented - so they would bring their children, and we saw...

●	Louise2	Role of church	132	132	But, I was able to talk to them – to talk to the volunteers – and say, “you know...” and I don’t even remember what I said, but we turned it around. And we became more welcoming. And it was such a blessing. And the people really responded to it. And see, here’s the hard thing... We were set-up to treat them like criminals. Because you have to show your I.D. You have to prove that you’re the person on the list – who is the allowed visitor. And sometimes you have to turn people away – because they’re not on the list. And you have to cover for the inadequacies of bureaucracy that doesn’t make everything clear. But, for a while it was really cute. You know, like, if we were running late, we’d call the next person on the list. So, then they would have my cell phone number, so the next month they’d be calling me. And I’m like... “I’m really sorry, but I’m not there yet.” You know and it’s like... so, it... that – somehow the checking of the I.D. made people feel like they were a closed door, rather than an open door. And, what I suggested – I remember now – what I suggested was – ok, they have to show us their I.D. So, the way to make this welcoming is that we should wear name tags – ‘cause then it’s not so one-sided. You know, it’s like, “I’m asking you who you are, and you need to prove it... Here’s who I am.” So that it’s a more equal exchange. And that really worked. And it, and I said, “No, really, this is hard for them. And we need to be the place – the people – the grease – that makes it easier.” So, we worked through that and it really worked well. And we got better and better at it. And then, other people in the congregation ran the minister off and Bob and I were like, “Okay, we’re done!” you know, “We’re just done!” “This is too painful.” So, um, we’re working back towards that.
●	Louise2	Role of church	133	133	In terms of the farm – when we first bought the farm – because we wanted it to be a pastoral retreat, we left the keys with the president of the congregation, to the house. And we said, “you know, if you need a place for somebody – if there is a need – here are the keys!” “You have the keys to this house down there.” So that’s how the volunteer groups got here. And so we made it available to them. And with that first pastor, that kinda worked really well. It really did.
●	Louise2	Role of church	133	133	one time, the president of the congregation - whose passed away now – he called me and he said, “Louise are you okay? You’re really down there in the wilderness, all alone! And I’m like really worried about you getting up on ladders by yourself and taking care of the water tank” So I said, “I’m okay, I’m good. So nice of you to call and check on me!”

●	Louise2	Role of church	134	135	<p>And the flowers that I have in the yard,— the Red Ti, and the — I have these plants that'll probably bloom tomorrow morning, they have, they look like white orchids, and I have little yellow flowers down there — all of those were gifts from a lady — in the church — who said, "Come to my house, after this ministry, and I'll feed you lunch, and I'll give you some flowers." And so I went down to her house and she told me her life story. And how she had started out as a coffee bride. She's Japanese. She grew up on Oahu. And she married into a family that was a coffee family on the big island. And she came here and they were workin' their butts off in the coffee field. And she was like, "I don't know about this." And there was a woman in the community who hung herself from the processing roof. And it was because she was just done in by the physical labor of the coffee farm. And Kathy said, "I looked at her, and I said, 'That could be me.' I have to find a way out of this." And so she got a job at one of the local banks. She got out of the coffee field 'cause it was so much work.</p> <p>But her husband has remained a farmer all this time. And so it was really interesting talking to her about all that.</p>
●	Louise2	Role of church	136	136	<p>That story has to do more with community grief than anything else. And also how isolated we are here. So, in a congregation here — in a faith community — you have people who come and go. You have two services during the winter — while the visiting congregation is here — the snowbirds — and they're all retired. We have three (3) children in that congregation. In the Episcopal congregation — we have one (1) child. So — aging congregations. Not the young families. Very, very different from your description of Los Angeles. And, so, it's... I keep trying to put that together — but it's hard. It's hard. Yeah — yeah, that's all I can say about that.</p>
●	Louise2	Role of church	146	146	<p>with the church for us, that is the kind of problem with the church — it is that it is too far away. There is not one that brings us closer to God within an easy commute. And that's why we kind of switch off on either just going to be alone in the forest with God, and pray that way. And Bob is especially good with that. He can... he really can hike and pray at the same time. I need my kneeler — my quiet place to be still. Because I get too, I sometimes get too sidetracked by the movement.</p>
●	Louise2	Role of church	165	165	<p>with the snow-birders - that transient population has no idea of the rumblings or of the other things, 'cause they, they're just gonna come to the worship service.</p>

●	Louise2	Role of church	165	165	The problem with the Episcopal church is the church was established by the Greenwell family. Most of the graves in the cemetery are Greenwell graves. So, the one Greenwell who still actually attends is like, "This is my grandfather's church." Okay, so I should have the most say in what we do and how things happen here. So, nobody that comes from the outside can possibly be an influential person here. It's like stepping into an old English church, you know, and the major landowner is gonna be the head of the congregation. (laughter)
●	Louise2	Role of church	165	166	<p>it is the hardcore islanders verses the new people. So that is part of the transient thing. It's like we come in as a new person and they're like, "Oh, no no no, you will learn in time how it is here on this island."</p> <p>And so, yeah, it's kind of like, it's hard for newbies to come in and, but they... you know. I think the Lutheran church is gonna be fine. They love Bob. He built them a beautiful Pascal candle stand at the request of one of the pastors. And they think he's terrific. And that's really nice. And as I said the prison ministry was successful for me. So, um, I guess just being myself is probably the advocacy that I need rather than running away. And sometimes you just have to run away for your own preservation.</p>

●	Louise2	Role of church	168	168	<p>We had a native Hawaiian couple – and when you say, “Native Hawaiian” that might be one tenth Hawaiian, or it might be half Hawaiian, because there was a lot of intermarriage. Most... pure native Hawaiians are extremely rare. But, we had a native Hawaiian couple. She was a Hala weaver, and he was Robbie; just he’s this eccentric great guy. And he’ll tell you his heritage is Scottish, Boston, Hawaiian, Portuguese – you know, all over the map. But the church wanted to re-do the garden, around the church. And these two native Hawaiian people said, “We ought to plant -native plants! We could plant dry-land Taro here. We could plant native shrubs.” And the pastor who came from Alaska, and before that, Maine, said, “No, no, we need to have these other things here; that are easy to take care of and that are...you know...” and so there is that... Robbie actually left the church. I actually heard people in the middle of that church stand up in the middle of the sermon and say, “That’s it! I’m outta here!” And walk out the back door. Because of what was being said in the sermon. It was, it was so amazing! and I have heard parishioners heckle the pastor, during the sermon. And say, “That might be okay with you, but it’s not okay with me!” In the middle of the... where you have people... tourists – visiting! It’s almost like, I would hope I would hear, “Amen!” “Alleluia!” Not, “I’m outta here!” So, but that was Robbie, standing up for his truth. And it is... and what the pastor said was, “I’m glad you feel free to express yourself.” But they’re always trying to run that pastor out on a rail. It’s amazing. And it’s not gracefilled. But... so, I’ve seen that tension within the groups. The truth is, if you live on this island for a long time, for some reason people need to feel that they know all the answers and that when newcomers come they don’t understand. And, in the churches part of it is that it’s very expensive to bring a pastor here. You know the normal thing is somebody comes for an interview. Well, that’s not 200 bucks for your mileage. That’s 1200 (twelve hundred) for your plane ticket. And so they tend to hire the first person that comes because they don’t want to double up on that \$1200 expense. And then, once the pastor gets here and they’re not really the pastor they need, they try and get rid of ‘em. Because they’re angry that they paid so much money to get ‘em here. And it’s not the right person – so that’s actually what I’ve seen over and over again. Don’t want an outsider. We want someone who understands the culture here. We want someone who will just listen to us, and just... we don’t want a leader. We want a follower. And because we know what we need. And we know how to do it. And I think that’s the most uncomfortable thing for Bob and I, because, what we look for is that mystical experience. And Bob looks for a sermon that really brings him closer to God and that inspires him to think throughout the week. And so we’re not looking for the... we’re not looking for that same arrangement that these other people are. We’re just gonna quietly go away and... yeah. So that’s been the tension with the congregations here.</p>
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●	Louise2	Role of church	172	176	<p>That's what happens when a retired high school principal becomes a priest. Okay</p> <p>(both laugh)</p> <p>L: They are not used to operating by committee. They are the boss.</p> <p>KR: Yeah, that's very true.</p> <p>L: And, he came to a congregation full of high schoolers, who were not willing to stay there.</p>
●	Louise2	Role of church	180	181	<p>To my knowledge, there is no support of the farming community. There are congregations – which I have not attended – we do have Hispanic congregations. We could say that the Episcopal priest offering the building – in exchange for janitorial services, I didn't say that, but – that the Marshallese are supported in that way by being given a place to worship. The priest found it very difficult to deal with the neighbors after that. Because they complained about the Marshallese music, they complained that the services went on too long. I think that we're in an era of non-tolerance of congregations... And here everything is very close, and it's true that sound travels here – unbelievably – I mean, we can ever tell where the sound is actually coming from.</p> <p>So, the neighbors around the Lutheran church really resent the fact that the church is there. They don't like the people driving through their neighborhood to get to it. They're the ones, I suspect who want us to have a closed and locked gate when we are not there, using the building. They don't like evening services, evening meetings. Because, to them – this is my residential neighborhood – but you can only build in certain areas on this island, and in truth a church was there before the housing development. But it's, that is, it's a small place. So you're gonna have this close interaction.</p>
●	Louise2	Role of church	181	181	<p>The high school is up above the Episcopal church and they have trouble with vandalism by the high school students. The pastor's truck was stolen two days after Christmas out of the parking lot. Well... he left his keys in the ignition. He came from Alaska – that's what you always did – if somebody needed your vehicle more than you did you assumed that they really needed it. Well, you can't do that in... at this urban area...where... with a brand new red Toyota pickup. Never to be seen again. You know, so there's that tension of the church buildings being inside of this community. And we all thought that's how it was supposed to be, right? The church was supposed to be the gathering point for the community.</p>

●	Louise2	Role of church	182	182	<p>They could advocate more for the students – which the Episcopal church did try and do. The Lutheran church has a dedicated woman who has a pretty much a one-woman ministry to the homeless. She and her husband go down like, every other week, taking them pizza and first aid kits and soaps and things like that; ‘cause we have a lot of homeless people in downtown Kona. ‘cause there are forests down there, and you can camp out in the forest and then hang out on the main drag during the day. So, but what I would like to see, when they talk about, “so, okay, we need to redo our church hall again...” Well then, for heaven’s sakes put showers in. Make facilities that can actually be used by the homeless. Now, what the homeowners association next door is gonna feel about that, is what prevents them from doing that. But if you see the problem, if you know that you’re supposed to be there for the least of these... You don’t need more classrooms you’re not going to use. You don’t need more... you need to provide the facilities for the least of those. And you need to realize that those facilities should be used for them; not just held tightly for yourself. There’s a Presbyterian church in Santa Fe that did exactly that. They have free concerts every weekend, they have – they remodeled to provide weekly showers for the homeless. Which, to me, that’s a really great thing to do. And, there’s a pos... there could even be an economic win for it – because if you can somehow move that homeless population from being in front of the tourists, then the legislature’s gonna be a whole lot happier. And, there has been some movements of trying to make affordable housing; but it’s come most from the county rather than the... and I’m talking about converting seatainers into dwelling units. But, we don’t have the kind of governments or non-profits here that can really do that. They’re, they’re just not strong enough. There’s only one (1) Lutheran church, there are only three (3) Episcopal churches, there... so, there we don’t have a lot of church congregations on the island who could do that.</p>
●	Louise2	Role of church	183	184	<p>the ministries are at the church, like you’re saying the prison ministry, the showers. People aren’t going from the church to the community, or to the farm, or to the ...</p> <p>L: Um, correct. It mostly happens at the church. Cindy does go downtown. She takes that ministry downtown, but then the city government wouldn’t... people in the congregation said, “we could do potlucks on the pier, but we need to get a permit.” Well, as soon as she asked permission, it was denied. And what she was doing, what they were doing, was providing meals for the homeless. So, the local government is not in accord with the faith communities doing that kind of thing. We had a pastor who used to say, “It is far easier to ask for [in unison L &amp; KR say] forgiveness instead of permission.” (laughter)</p>

●	Louise2	Role of church	186	186	The– KCFA – the Kona Coffee Farmer’s Association – is much better at advocating for Farmer’s Workers and Farm workers and saying, “You need to have the proper facilities for them. You need to do that...” And then the members say, “Oh, you don’t need that...” So, yeah. It’s, uh, mind boggling. The major tension for me is, yes, I would like to get rid of most of the coffee so that I did not have to worry about that labor force. But, I have to worry about that labor force! They’re a part of my community. So that’s a huge tension in my life. And the... but there are churches now that have Hispanic services. The first one’s English, the second one’s Hispanic. And that’s really good because there is a large Hispanic population here. And they are mostly coffee farmers. And they are trying to do their own cooperatives. And really take a bigger niche in the market. We have the Japanese, the Chinese, the Filipino, the Anglos, and the Hispanics – who are all doing coffee farming. And have their own little niche in it. So, it’s pretty interesting.
●	Louise2	Role of church	202	202	And I’m a trained “Steven Minister”, which really helps in life - a lot. I feel like I’ve been really talking for three (3) days, but my normal thing is to try and listen to people. ‘Cause I was very well-trained in that. That’s something that this island actually needs. Like any place, most of the congregations are aging now. And to be able to take care of each other. That listening skill is really huge – I believe. Again, it’s just saying, “I see you.” It’s that recognition of the other and giving them their opportunity. So...
●	Louise2	Role of church	212	212	I think that Larry Rasmussen’s saying - that we no longer have the Lion’s club, and the Kiwanis club, and the social clubs to lead us, that movements that are counter-capitalistic are best fostered in faith communities. And that our churches should be... you know, don’t build another classroom – build a garden. Um, that that’s a good place for people to learn. And we went through that in Los Alamos with the secretary saying, “We should be recycling all these bulletins with all this paper.” And the council saying, “Oh, we can’t afford that. We can’t afford the recycling bin.” And she said, “Then I’ll pay for it. I can’t sit here and see this happening.” And so, that people need to stand up for that truth. It’s not... we can’t always pay attention to economics. We need to pay attention to what is right. And I get... you know, for me to decide what is right. It’s not me that’s deciding. It’s my best educated guess. And, but it’s not me that came up with the idea – certainly. And... that would be a good thing for the churches to do. Is to... when you send your children – if you are lucky enough to have children in your congregation – when you send them off during the sermon – they should be going to the garden.
●	Louise2	Role of church	214	214	And that’s what Larry Rasmussen’s church has. And the kids actively play in an indoor garden in the winter-time. So that... And they participate in the recycling and all of that stuff. And I think that that’s our best hope. We learn best as children. And that’s the way it becomes natural to you. So the children are really the future. And I think that’s it.

●	Amber2	Role of church	4	4	Church, it revolved, we never missed church. My friends will tell my mom, you like, “Oh we just couldn’t make it to church.” And I just know what she’s thinking you know. She’s thinking, you know, just priority. She knew what she could and couldn’t do and she tried to give us as much structure of faith as she could.
●	Amber2	Role of church	18	18	There’s so many voices telling me not to love my roots. Even within the Christian church.
●	Amber2	Role of church	20	21	I mean, you know just it’s, it’s something out there as opposed to worshipping Jesus here.  K: Right. You have to go somewhere else to do it.
●	Amber2	Role of church	70	70	Church groups you know that want to come out and do a picnic on the farm and um, so it’s that way.
●	Amber2	Role of church	92	92	So I think, maybe it’s just getting back to humanity and just looking at each other and having conversations and, and how do you do that, that’s not gonna be a big program or you know, “we’re going to be human now!” No. But just living authentically and I do see, I do see the look in the eyes of our younger generation and they’re looking for something. They’re longing for something. I think even with all the savvy and all that, I mean, they want to be invited into something. Um, to be you know just like all of us to be loved, and valued and included and I think we kind of have them off on an island right now. We’re kind of afraid of them and I think it’s just, um, looking at life more like a family – you know your older, your younger. How do we start making some of those connections. Get everybody out of their little isolated worlds which brings me back to my first point is I think that’s the role of the church.
●	Amber2	Role of church	97	97	You talked about rootedness and this place teaching you that and how sometimes the church even encourages you to go somewhere else instead of that and I feel like that kind of connects with what you just said about this, and maybe not, so feel free to correct me. But in terms of this idea of maybe an issue being, and you said in this last section unrootedness, and so what do you think if you could think about um, kind of fusing all of this together in terms of how could the church encourage this idea of rootedness, what would your dream be to build that family that you’re talking about and does this place tie into that or how would place tie into that? Does that make sense?

●	Amber2	Role of church	100	100	Our church is a very, has an urban feel to it. Sometimes I feel like it becomes more of a corporate business model in the church than family and I've worked in the corporate world and I've worked in family business. And you can have family business. I do believe Jesus has a mission. We have some work. We can have some shrewdness. We can have some you know putting some things out before him and taking that. But, it's within this structure that's already set of submission and, and coming in and generations and understanding what God says about the beauty of us growing older and that wisdom and that love where you know what and I can feel it at 41. Like I'd much rather serve someone else and breathe whatever life God can breathe through me into them, I would much rather breathe life into yo... I know I have all that, you know what I mean. I have all I need for myself.
●	Amber2	Role of church	102	102	So I think it's a little bit of a philosophy on how you're gonna first of within the church how you're gonna approach? Are you more of a grassroots church where you're saying, "This is who we are, this is where are, this is who we start growing out and start moving in." As opposed to "This is the structure that we're going to put in to it." And I do think, I'm not trying to be critical of the church I go to because I think that's how they started. Now they're 3,000, 6,000 people depending on you know. It's just different. And so the way they have to structure themselves is different. They try to still use small groups and feed in, but it just, it loses something. It just loses something.
●	Amber2	Role of church	106	106	You know how big can you, how big can you be and still have humanity and still be looking people in the eye and, and um, those sorts of things. So the questions aren't that different. It's just that you're not forced to submit to them in the church where here I was forced to come in and wrestle with it and struggle
●	Amber2	Role of church	106	106	I say, "Do you think that pleases Jesus Christ?" To have us all in our little corners. I don't think so! You know read the Bible! (Last two sentences, voice gets more intense and passionate) The music [in church] becomes very much, and I, so, I get passionate about that, because I mean yes, music is a wonderful expression and it's meant to deeply imbed truth in us and carry it with us. It's not the main point. How you do that. And I think we just get, we get off you know where, how do we grow in our depth with Jesus in this society? I mean that's the question. The farm naturally slows you down and humbles you, but then I also know that there's that tension, um, that some people God really has called to be on the frontier and pushing that, so I guess maybe, maybe it's more on the discipleship side of it and understanding outreach will happen, but maybe it's being that consistent place that's inviting people in and caring for them and tending for them. Now that should be happening. Is it happening? I don't know. And it's probably not gonna be on a big scale. I can't talk, I can't talk to three people the same way I talk to one person.

●	Amber2	Role of church	110	112	<p>And maybe just recognizing that in the church, but again, were in a culture where people aren't forced to submit to it. So if you think you can just flutter away from it. If this is hard and you have to sit. But God has a funny way of, right?</p> <p>K: Yeah. (chuckles)</p> <p>A: Of humbling all of us. And we think that when He has us confined we're being punished.</p>
●	Amber2	Role of church	156	156	<p>I've felt as supported as I could feel by our church. You know I feel like you know everybody's kind of running in their own little worlds and you come alongside and you do some tasks together or you you know you do some discipleship and you kind of part. So thinking about u, specific like making this a really open place where you learn, it kind of just happens organically. You know like relational one-on-one. I'm trying to think of how. So it is happening.</p>

- Amber2      Role of church      158      160      So the church certainly isn't in the way of it. Again, I don't think they, but again, most people can't relate, like if you were talking, they can't relate to this way of life so it wouldn't, it wouldn't make a lot of sense to them. Again, I think it goes into, and this is our specific church, it goes into this discipleship idea and maybe moving out more to the applied theology and getting it in your life and leading the way as an example another way of doing things, another life, but the best way to do it is to come walk alongside it. You can lecture all you wan and say this is how things go, so um, you know and I know different churches that have done you know plots, garden plots on their sites and things. Things like that and our church isn't quite as much like that. You know, they have their own place of going out. I, Yeah, maybe it's just developing the conversation right now, the community, finding those who love growing and starting to connect some generations and skills and saying, you know, you see that happening in schools and colleges and just starting to enter, enter into that. But I guess that would be my first thought of just finding those who are already..

K: likeminded

A: likeminded, and then again, having something you can invite people into and so a place where you know you are actually growing something would be wonderful. So if a farm could be that place, you wouldn't have to do it all on the church campus. You know, you could come out and grow. I think like you're doing in some ways there's again, it's you living your life and having something to invite other people into. And I think generationally you'll find appeal. And even into the food then, and sharing meals and um, and all of that. Yeah, it's a big. I'm not sure I have any more on that. I haven't really thought about ....

●	Judy2	Role of church	118	118	Our church is big, but we have a lot of people that do come out you know to the farm. Like when we have, Amber hosts a worship team picnic in the summer so they're all out here then and everyone's in the barn and all over the place. (laughs) And I've hosted deaconess picnics already out here and we usually coordinate them about the same time because we have all the tables set up out here. And then they're out here – so anybody's welcome you know to bring a lot of the kids that I'm talking about her [Amber's] friends, they're from church, they're bringing their kids out to the farm or if they have family they'll say, "Can we bring family to the farm?" We'll say, "Oh yeah come on out." So that kind of thing is you know is probably more so. Because we, our church is so big that I think it's hard. I mean like yours is smaller so you can do that more so I think. And even when we were at St. Peter's probably, I mean everybody knew who we were and everybody knew they were welcome but at the same time but you don't work that much with them. But vegetables, like when Tami plants vegetables I mean she's taking them to St. Peter's all the time and handing them out there. You know she just gives them to people so. And I don't, I guess Amber's taking some to Alliance to the worship team to share things like that. So that's kind of working together, but then you know not really.
●	Judy2	Role of church	120	120	Cause like even in Forest Junction, I can remember I grew up in a church with only a couple hundred people and it's just a whole different thing. So we try to do those things like those little picnics. The seniors have been out here a couple years where they bring those good potlucks and everything you know. So we've had them out. We've gotten a wagon and then they get rides out to the woods and that type of thing. They see the land and the old farmers just love that watching the corn grow seeing the corn grow and that type of thing you know. We've had that, we've hosted those a couple years. And we've probably can again now that we have the shed. 'Cause we just put the shed up this year and it's a better facility than the other one. Yeah, the other one the floor's a little crooked and stuff you know. And the seniors get a little bit, I understand, you have to be careful how you walk you know. So I could probably tell Pastor Dick that we have this now.
●	Jeannette2	Role of church	119	119	So I grew up heavily involved in that and was there, but Evergreen helped me ya know really feel it, feel like understand more about God... and how...maybe this uh, this sin-thing was not like everything about religion and that there are other components that we should be worried about and thinking about. And I didn't really tackle that concept until I came back here and realized, huh, I feel like you can still be a Christian and do a lot of the things they told me I couldn't do. Ya know, like, be queer, for instance, which I am and have come to on this farm and ya know and that was very very very important being able to take that step in full self-realization I think.



●	Jeannette2	Role of church	151	151	how to get the Episcopalian church, considering we are an Episcopalian organization,... because we depend on them because we are Episcopalian, like we depend on it spiritually, it's such a huge part of our faith component, how to also like financially or economically use them as a resource. So I know we have gotten a lot of grants through them, but just on the smaller scale, how could we work with local Episcopalian churches to partner um, to either get food to people who need it through their churches or use their churches like a CSA pick up site and have them support their local farm in a very meaningful way?
●	Jeannette2	Role of church	153	155	<p>It hasn't so far, just little things, little things. But it would be nice to have this part of the church in that way.</p> <p>K: What do you think hinders that?</p> <p>J: Details wise – it's the fact that the church demographic typically is a lot of older folks who don't cook with these vegetables very much.</p>
●	Jeannette2	Role of church	157	157	So they've tried to, we've had a couple of relationships with churches and they just drop off because it's hard work. It's cooking a lot and it's using vegetables that you may not necessarily be familiar with. Things like that. Yeah. But I think it would be nice to see...like you were saying more visionary voices in this movement that were more reflective of gender and race and while I love Wendell Berry and Wes Jackson, especially Wendell Berry, the future would be nice to see Reyna or Zega Ortega
●	Reyna	Role of church	29	29	I think the church has a big impact on people. Maybe it can mention these issues more in actual services. With the slogan of you really harvest what you plant.
●	Sarah	Role of church	20	20	the role of the church is to farm, that the role of the church is to create community through food, through agriculture, that like the way of Christ is kind of creating alternative spaces and opportunities that are housed in relationship.
●	Sarah	Role of church	32	32	I liaise with the Episcopal church a lot and so actively going and telling our story because I feel really strongly about sharing our narrative as being really important. So going to conferences and things like that.
●	Sarah	Role of church	44	44	Ya know having a church is part of having our farm, there's plays a big role in what it looks like. Community is people, but community is also kind of it, it's it's it's, um, it's like a container for us to kind of work out all of these things that are important and to and ya know we work out reconciliation and we work out transformation in community and so it kind of contains the experiences we are gonna have to become ya know to live into who we want to be.

●	Sarah	Role of church	46	46	Yeah, our partnerships I think with both the Lutheran and Episcopal church and Cal Lutheran University have been really great. We've, we have a wonderful, I mean there's issues that always come up within the politics of any intuition but have just felt a lot of support and joy and feel like we're a joy for the church and that feels good. We partner a lot with local universities. We are active with some of our local social justice, like the organizations that are working
●	Sarah	Role of church	54	54	I would say initially there is kind of a subtle, kind of undergirding like foundational layer of spirituality that anyone experiences when they connect to farming and to agriculture, to growing food. Our organization, myself, the people that are part of our organization are very explicit about it though, which is why we do feel that our worship service is such a tangible kind of, in a sense the farm is an outgrowth, or like was born out of our worship and our prayer, but now it feeds ..the farm, the farm both feeds figuratively but also literally because we have a potluck afterwards and everyone, our CSA members bring their food. So that breaking bread together both ya know bread and wine around the table at Eucharist and then it happens with like salad and soup afterwards. And then that's very much like feeling like we're practicing our faith and we're practicing what we believe about feeding and being fed.
●	Sarah	Role of church	58	58	the spirituality of Abundant Table. I don't, I'd probably have to think about it more.... (long pause).... I, ya know, I think our spirituality is definitely thinking of the word rooted and radical as being connected right? Like roots are really important to us but and in that kind of radical pushing, we want to be on the edge of the church kind of pushing the edges. And also we're on the edge of kind of the agricultural community pushing the edges of what it, what is possible, and also wanting to kind of wanting to retell the stories of ya know I think part of our spirituality is uncovering the stories that get covered up.

●	Sarah	Role of church	72	72	Which is an indictment on our larger; it's an indictment on the country's how it values agriculture and the food it eats and then also our low cost of food, international trade agreements, and just corporate farming and that's what it's gonna become actually. And that's where I feel like the church has a role to play because 1. the church owns land across the country so if it's not in California, somewhere else there's land. The church can create some alternative economies. I feel like the church has role to play because what we do, we get up every morning to do the impossible and that's resurrection. It's the impossible thing that happened, that you never expected would happen but it happened, and so ya know every Sunday we believe in the resurrection and every day we should believe in the resurrection. So the role of the church is to say "We're gonna choose to do what doesn't make sense and what's gonna be impossible because that is, ya know, that's the narrative we have chosen to commit ourselves to" and so maybe it doesn't make sense for a secular or some other or even maybe another religious community to think that agriculture, small-scale agriculture, community-based agriculture is a good choice because it's maybe not a good choice in other terms but I feel like within the Christian church if we're committing to Christ in, kind of walking the way that Christ revealed in scripture, we're kind of committing to something that doesn't make any sense which is small-scale agriculture.
●	Sarah	Role of church	101	101	it makes such a big difference as people get to know their food system. Figuring out how to educate yourself and this is something we've thought about doing with churches – how to break down a meal, like you have a potluck, can you breakdown where everything came from? Beginning to know your kind of global and local food system is really important to understanding where the barriers and breakdowns are and where the positive lights are. And then that would hopefully inspires folks to get to know a farmer or a rancher or an urban gardener and being to kind of explore what their life is like and how they're trying to survive. I think getting involved in anything around farm worker issues is really important and there are definitely organizations in different regions that address that but that's connected to immigration and economics and just recognizing how interconnected and just trying to figure out what organizations in one's community are working on these things.
●	Sarah	Role of church	111	111	I definitely think we want to be an example or a leader in kind of the religious communities around seeing this as not just a trend or um, ... a side project but that it's a core narrative that we would like to see religious communities, specifically the church, pick up and really want them to know and about, how we can, why it's a core narrative.
●	Sarah	Role of church	125	125	majority of our funding outside of our farm comes from churches, church-wide organizations and individuals in the church.

●	Sarah	Role of church	127	127	There's just so much support like people are so excited about it, they are throwing money. I mean it's, we've talked about moving away a little bit, but really at the end of the day it's our biggest supporter and maybe our most long term supporter, financially but also in other ways. So I think, I don't feel institutionally the church has ever been a hindrance. It has been a hindrance, well, we've had issues with certain parts of the institution but those didn't necessarily have to do with what we are doing, so I feel like it's more of just bad politics.
●	Sarah	Role of church	129	129	I think it's something that is hopeful, um, I think it's also something that when they come and experience and visit, they experience community in a way they rarely ever do in their own church community and I think they experience a connection to creation in a way that they never experience and I just think you can't help but feel excited and inspired and I think a lot of folks feel and many people are gardeners and they love to talk about their gardens which happens a lot (laughter) and I mean maybe even on their windowsill but like people love that and I think that makes them love us which is kind of funny.
●	Sarah	Role of church	129	129	probably my more cynical side, we have so many young folks in our community that I think they're just like, "Oh that's good, there they are. There are the young people." And that's more within the mainline Protestant church, that's not the case everywhere.
●	Sarah	Role of church	131	131	because we'll have like a land blessing or I'll have a service or they come to one of our weekend CSA event and it's just, I think because our staff and our team is in such good spirit and are excited to connect, they see the health of our organization. And I think that's actually a big thing, people feel how healthy we are and I think so many churches are unhealthy and people, politics, and dynamics, and it's like you're arguing over the linen or where this decoration is going to go and what's happened is people are stuck and even, not that we don't have the things that kind of get us stuck, but I think we work really really hard to model healthy relationship and not just healthy relationship to how we farm, but healthy relationship to how we interact with each other and I think people see that and experience that and so that's kind of the experience of community where it's like this mutuality of care and love and support and celebration versus just kind of perpetuating what we've always done. And we perpetuate what we've always done, but I think in a diff... in a way that doesn't I think just feels stifling.

●	Sarah	Role of church	133	133	I feel strongly that like churches, especially churches within the mainline protestant church, there's lots of money in the pews, it's less and less but it's still lots of money in land and I feel strongly that they should be supporting farmers with, as much, within their communities as much as they can whether they're faith based or they're not. Like I think an investment in the people who are growing food in their community whether they eat it or they donate it to a food bank, but that I just think there is no reason not to and really feel like churches should probably connect themselves to some sort of agricultural community if they can.
●	Sarah	Role of church	135	135	well visit a farm. I think, get involved in a CSA or if you as a church community don't feel you can consume all the vegetables, purchase CSA shares for a local food bank so that the farm, so that the food, the food, the people at the food bank can get fresh local vegetables, but the farm also gets the income they need to be sustainable.
●	Sarah	Role of church	137	137	Probably take a look at their theology.
●	Alice	Resources/ Advocacy	90	92	<p>How much do you know about Practical Farmers of Iowa?</p> <p>KR: Nothing</p> <p>A: Anyway, they're great! They were founded – I think that they just celebrated thirty years? They were founded by sort-of sustainable famers, who were interested in doing on-farm research, that were of a rigorous standard to be useful – to have relevant results - but to be doing research about things that the universities and the big companies weren't doing. About the kind of farming – the scale of farming that they were on and about more sustainable environmental practices. And so, that has been the core of PFI – is this - farmers, together doing farm research and then sharing – just really openly sharing. Sort-of the practical details of how they're farming and what they've tried. So, they do these replicated and randomized trials. We've been doing one or two or three PFI experiments every year – this is probably our second year. And usually they're being replicated – so you're doing three or four reps on your own farm, but they're being replicated on a number of other farms also, at the same time, so you can then compile your results and get more relevant data. But, they do other things. They host, like - 90 field days, and some social events, and they have a conference, and there was a time when they were doing cluster groups. So, I was meeting once a month with other similar farmers in our county – I think – they have a beginning farmer program where they match you with a mentor and you make a business plan and you save money and they match it. Anyway, they do lots of great things. But I feel like that has really helped the Iowa farm community to be strong and transparent. I guess, or, to really value that open sharing of information.</p>

●	Alice	Resources/ Advocacy	16	16	And almost every year we've been able to cover the farm's expenses with the CSA member shares that we sell. And that is approximately 1/3 of the food we grow - we sell to the CSA and the other 2/3 we give away - through people who are doing work-shares or directly to families who we know, or through the food pantries and the soup kitchens and the shelters.
●	Alice	Resources/ Advocacy	163	167	<p>We've done some work with Pesticide Action Network and I could do more... but I, yeah, I would like it to stop. I would like everyone to know how bad it is, and I would like it to stop, and I would like us to be... I'd like to stop having danger to human and all the ecosystem health, but...</p> <p>KR: So, what resources do we need to proceed with that advocacy? If you could dream up a plan...</p> <p>A: I think Pesticide Action Network has really, like, a good agenda. I think that some of the things that they are asking for are really reasonable – just transparency. Like, that ... anything that is being sprayed is on a public record. And that we ... yeah, that we know what's being sprayed and we know what the actual harm is. You know, and whether that means we have, like, real unbiased scientists doing research on these things. But, I feel like we kind of know – they are poisons. They are killing things. And, they're meant to kill things. And it seems outrageous to think that trying... if you chemically kill something that that's just going to be over. I mean, if you physically kill something that has repercussions. You know. But, like, if you chemically kill something ...</p> <p>KR: Where does it go?</p> <p>A: You know, like, one – you didn't ... [1:20:00] you didn't just, like, laser-kill that thing. [laughter] You know, you just broad-spectrum poisoned and killed this thing. Like, I don't know – It just seems obvious that there's gonna be bad repercussions.</p>
●	Alice	Resources/ Advocacy	167	167	But I do think that, like, a real public awareness... I don't, again, it is kind of confusing to me. I feel like people can really know things and, like, choose to not care, or, like, have this degree of apathy, or hopelessness, where it doesn't matter, or they don't want to think about it... nothing's gonna change anyway. So, like, maybe it wouldn't make a difference, but I just feel like - I feel like a kindergarten class would obviously be able to say, "Wow, it's really bad to poison everything for thousands of acres and kill everything." ... like, that's their plan. That's their farming plan – "we're just gonna kill everything." Um, and that doesn't seem right.

●	Alice	Resources/ Advocacy	169	170	<p>If it was actual good, you know, state of Iowa, like, investigation, and every time there was a report, if they came and were really seriously like, “we... this is not okay. We’re not gonna let this happen.” And like, “it’s not your responsibility farmer. Like, you told us about this, and like, it is our responsibility now to make sure that this doesn’t...” you know, like, this person doesn’t get off the hook. There will be a consequence for this. ‘Cause that’s not how it is right now. Anyway, I don’t know what it would take, it just seems like it shouldn’t... It just seems so ridiculous. And, yeah, I think everybody believes these stories. But, I don’t think they really believe them... like, I don’t know – like, this is the only way? Like, we’re feeding the world... the world relies on the Midwest to produce all this, like, horrible food... and fuel... And, you know, and we’re saving the world by destroying it...</p> <p>But it’s about dollars. I mean, a lot of these farmers it’s just about subsidies, and commodities, and equipment, and their motives are not pure, but often good. It’s like – “I want my kids to have a good education.” “I want my family to be comfortable.” You know, and it’s, I dunno, I just think it’s all so entrenched.</p>
●	Alice	Resources/ Advocacy	181	181	<p>I actually feel like he’s been putting out lots of inspiring literature, and saying lots of inspiring things, and doing lots of inspiring things about issues I really care about. And yeah, bringing social teachings back into the center of the faith, and, you know, setting aside – pushing more to the side – a lot of these questions of personal morality – I think – sexual morality – this personal judging of other people and ranking of people, and being, like [1:30:00] that’s not at all, like, what should be at the center of our... we should be talking about justice and personally, like, being caring. Instead of personally judging. So, I just feel, I don’t know... I feel good about it. I feel like he’s been taking lost of bold actions. I feel like, I would love it if all Catholics were taking lots of bold actions and stepping out of their own comfort zone and everybody else’s comfort zone... and anyway... So, I mean, I’m sure he could do more... But I...</p>
●	Alice	Resources/ Advocacy	182	182	<p>The Catholic Workers are also, I feel like, are doing a lot of things really great that I care about. And I think the past couple years the movement, at least in the Midwest, has been trying to look at racism, and I think that is really relevant. I mean, the Catholic Worker movement has been a lot of white people – not all – but a lot of them and I think that it’s just important to really... I mean, racism is a huge deal. And, and... what’s the word? Anyway... what is the word – that it’s ...</p>

●	Louise2	Resources/ Advocacy	42	42	I find that when you're growing food, I feel very responsible for it being used. And that's really... food waste drives me crazy. And it's true the wild turkey's will eat the avocados. They go on the ground and that just happens sometimes. That happens a lot, still what I want to do is establish, not a market, for that extra produce - but a place that needs it, like the food bank, or the schools or whatever. The thing is that you have to deal with all the safe food rules with that and it's you know like, "gah – didn't you ever eat an acorn as a kid? What?"
●	Louise2	Resources/ Advocacy	44	44	We have taken avocados and lemons down to the fishing village and just left them in the park, and they disappear very quickly. So that's good.
●	Louise2	Resources/ Advocacy	58	58	And apparently NRCS is very supportive of what we were doing, because they – as we were signing off on our last project – and that was like a three (3) or four (4) year process that we had worked with them – they said, "we've got more money for you, we'll help you plant more natives if you want to." And now, we're growing natives from seed. And that's the other thing that we do, so we're taking care of the little seedlings. Waiting patiently for them to grow. And then constantly we're looking for places that we can plant more of them. And trying to get better at that all the time. So we have a little nursery. We probably have, probably about 60 plants down there that we have to tend. We water those every other day. It doesn't take much time, it just takes memory to do it. You have to keep on a regular schedule to do it, or else it gets really confusing.
●	Louise2	Resources/ Advocacy	133	133	In terms of the farm – when we first bought the farm – because we wanted it to be a pastoral retreat, we left the keys with the president of the congregation, to the house. And we said, "you know, if you need a place for somebody – if there is a need – here are the keys!" "You have the keys to this house down there." So that's how the volunteer groups got here. And so we made it available to them. And with that first pastor, that kinda worked really well. It really did.
●	Louise2	Resources/ Advocacy	147	147	this is a very development oriented government here in Hawaii. And the farmers are very frustrated by the Oahu being the seat of government – which is not where most of the food is grown, and it is not the place – Maui and the Big Island, Kauai are far more active in farm-to-home food movements in "One Island, One Canoe"... we're all in it together, we need to be buying local – because we could clearly grow all the food we need on these islands. And yet, our supermarkets – like Safeway – they do have stuff that's labeled "local", but it's mostly imported from other places. The fact that you can buy imported bananas, and everybody else is trying to give their bananas away, is just absolutely ludicrous. But we do have the food movements. Hopefully they will go forward, but the legislature does not listen to us. They do not go along with the idea of origin, the idea of truth in labeling, because they are captive to the big corporations – to Monsanto – they're definitely captive to that. And they feel that that's where the economic future of the island is. Which is so unfortunate.



●	Louise2	Resources/ Advocacy	150	151	<p>you said you pay Ramon 80% and is that just something that you have been called to do? Or...</p> <p>L: That's a faith call. Um, it's kind of like reverse share cropping where the sharecropper earns the most money and the landowner is just providing the opportunity. Because we do pay for all the chemicals too. So, the farmworkers make the major share of the income from the farm and that was really just us saying, "You know what, we have enough income. We need to share. 'Cause this feels good – for us." So, that's how we kinda came up with that formula. I think that there are probably other farmers in the same situation that we're in that are probably pretty angry with us for giving Ramon the fuel to say, "Well, Louise pays me 80%..." you know, so, and it might have been an unrealistic expectation, for him, that everybody would buy that deal; but it seems okay to me. It's just kind of... you know – that's really hard work he does, and I don't have to do the commute that he does and it seems like he ought to be fairly paid for it. So, yeah. And, but that was definitely just a moral faith decision on our parts.</p>
●	Louise2	Resources/ Advocacy	159	161	<p>That turtle over there is a Marshall Island weaving – because two years ago – the year before - the Pastor's wife had organized a Christmas Eve party for the Marshall Island congregation at our church. And they came and sang at the – and they're, they're amazing musicians! – And they came and sang at the Christmas Eve Service and we put on this Christmas party for them. And there were stacks of presents for all the children. And the next year, she was going on - her husband was going on - sabbatical and so they were not going to be there for the planning period. And I said, "Pam, how can I help you? How can I help you to get this Christmas Party together? What can I do while you're away? And the next thing I knew, in the bulletin it said, "and Louise is in charge of the Marshall Island Christmas Party."</p> <p>KR: Oh, great.</p> <p>L: So, I said, "Okay, I opened my mouth; I'll do it." And it was wonderful. It was fabulous. But I made sure that when they came back, I was kind of invisible and Pam helped the Marshall Island pastor give the presents out. I said, "I don't... my thing is that I do it in the background. I don't want to be the person up front." And it was probably the best Christmas Eve I've ever had and the kids were so appreciative. And so were the women. We had lots of second-hand gifts for the women of household goods, and clothing and stuff. They took it all. It was really great for them. But it's a very different society. And I think that there's room for all of us in this canoe. And so that kind of tension is... so in other words, I've had good interactions but then I've also heard gossip behind it and it's just really hurtful.</p>

●	Louise2	Resources/ Advocacy	163	163	I need to have the courage to speak to it. And just like with the prison ministry, to be able to say, "Maybe we could do this a little differently so that it feels different. And unfortunately, I've felt that both faith communities were really into judging people. That that was their major form of entertainment. And that's why we're not still there. Because, so... when you say, "advocacy," I don't really, that term doesn't. I don't even know what to do with that term. Okay, either by definition or by... I just, I don't know what to do with it. But I feel that myself, personally, I need to be able to stand up for truth. And just say, it's like Bernie says, "we are all in this together." (laughter) That we need to realize we need to take care of each other, instead of being so critical of other groups. But sometimes... and then I say that, and then I say... well, I don't go to that church anymore 'cause they were critical. And does that make me critical? But maybe that makes me just stand up for my own truth. That I don't want to be near that poisoned atmosphere. So I try to, as I say, the planting and weeding volunteer groups that we belong to - they are more faith-filled than the congregations are. And it's not how much we can judge each other. It's just - let's all try to accomplish this together. And so I need to personally put myself in spaces where that is happening. But also, when I'm in the other space, how do you s... I, I don't know. I don't want to be judgemental of them, but I want to stand up for the truth. That's very important to me.
●	Louise2	Resources/ Advocacy	166	166	it's hard for newbies to come in and, but they... you know. I think the Lutheran church is gonna be fine. They love Bob. He built them a beautiful Pascal candle stand at the request of one of the pastors. And they think he's terrific. And that's really nice. And as I said the prison ministry was successful for me. So, um, I guess just being myself is probably the advocacy that I need rather than running away. And sometimes you just have to run away for your own preservation.
●	Louise2	Resources/ Advocacy	167	168	you have these communities that you're going to to volunteer and plant trees and there's this distance issue, and how do you think that the church could, or do you even want them to be involved with a group like that, or do that work, or be involved in the farm, or...?  L: Oh, I would love that. If the, at the... I've seen people try.

●	Louise2	Resources/ Advocacy	182	182	<p>They could advocate more for the students – which the Episcopal church did try and do. The Lutheran church has a dedicated woman who has a pretty much a one-woman ministry to the homeless. She and her husband go down like, every other week, taking them pizza and first aid kits and soaps and things like that; ‘cause we have a lot of homeless people in downtown Kona. ‘cause there are forests down there, and you can camp out in the forest and then hang out on the main drag during the day. So, but what I would like to see, when they talk about, “so, okay, we need to redo our church hall again...” Well then, for heaven’s sakes put showers in. Make facilities that can actually be used by the homeless. Now, what the homeowners association next door is gonna feel about that, is what prevents them from doing that. But if you see the problem, if you know that you’re supposed to be there for the least of these... You don’t need more classrooms you’re not going to use. You don’t need more... you need to provide the facilities for the least of those. And you need to realize that those facilities should be used for them; not just held tightly for yourself. There’s a Presbyterian church in Santa Fe that did exactly that. They have free concerts every weekend, they have – they remodeled to provide weekly showers for the homeless. Which, to me, that’s a really great thing to do. And, there’s a pos... there could even be an economic win for it – because if you can somehow move that homeless population from being in front of the tourists, then the legislature’s gonna be a whole lot happier. And, there has been some movements of trying to make affordable housing; but it’s come most from the county rather than the... and I’m talking about converting seatainers into dwelling units. But, we don’t have the kind of governments or non-profits here that can really do that. They’re, they’re just not strong enough. There’s only one (1) Lutheran church, there are only three (3) Episcopal churches, there... so, there we don’t have a lot of church congregations on the island who could do that.</p>
●	Louise2	Resources/ Advocacy	183	184	<p>the ministries are at the church, like you’re saying the prison ministry, the showers. People aren’t going from the church to the community, or to the farm, or to the ...</p> <p>L: Um, correct. It mostly happens at the church. Cindy does go downtown. She takes that ministry downtown, but then the city government wouldn’t... people in the congregation said, “we could do potlucks on the pier, but we need to get a permit.” Well, as soon as she asked permission, it was denied. And what she was doing, what they were doing, was providing meals for the homeless. So, the local government is not in accord with the faith communities doing that kind of thing. We had a pastor who used to say, “It is far easier to ask for [in unison L &amp; KR say] forgiveness instead of permission.” (laughter)</p>

●	Louise2	Resources/ Advocacy	186	186	<p>The– KCFA – the Kona Coffee Farmer’s Association – is much better at advocating for Farmer’s Workers and Farm workers and saying, “You need to have the proper facilities for them. You need to do that...” And then the members say, “Oh, you don’t need that...” So, yeah. It’s, uh, mind boggling. The major tension for me is, yes, I would like to get rid of most of the coffee so that I did not have to worry about that labor force. But, I have to worry about that labor force! They’re a part of my community. So that’s a huge tension in my life. And the... but there are churches now that have Hispanic services. The first one’s English, the second one’s Hispanic. And that’s really good because there is a large Hispanic population here. And they are mostly coffee farmers. And they are trying to do their own cooperatives. And really take a bigger niche in the market. We have the Japanese, the Chinese, the Filipino, the Anglos, and the Hispanics – who are all doing coffee farming. And have their own little niche in it. So, it’s pretty interesting.</p>
●	Louise2	Resources/ Advocacy	190	192	<p>Pretty much not. We do have Hispanic contributors. And they mostly come from South America. We’ll bring people over, or people will come for research here, and we’ll get them to give lectures. And we try to include the Hispanic worker population in that by making sure that some of those are in Spanish. And, but, you... it’s difficult to get them to come – ‘cause those guys – Ramon says, “I don’t have time to go to lectures, I gotta work!” I have gotten him to come to a lecture with me once and he finally went to the Coffee Berry Borer class so that he could take advantage of a program that gives you a subsidy payment to purchase the fungus needed to kill the borer. You know? And so, it’s the timing of those, and, yeah. It’s a pretty complicated system.</p> <p>That would be, in terms of the farmworkers, I wish that the... it was easier for the Hispanics to buy land to set up their own cooperative. And Charlie, down here, was just saying, “They’re really gettin’ better at it.” That they’re getting more cohesive. And I think that would be a great thing. Because they – each culture is different. We meld. But we’re – but there are really different ethics and nobody works as hard as the Hispanic community. And they are just really really hard workers. And family-oriented. And, it’s pretty neat to be with them.</p> <p>But you wish you could impart more. Even though Ramon has been doing this for a very long time. He knows nothing about nutrient management. If it says, “Coffee Booster” on the outside, it’s okay. He knows nothing about soil preservation. Nothing about the pesticides. It’s just – “We do what has been done in the past.” Nothing about the idea of chipping and mulching. That was all new to him.</p>

●	Louise2	Resources/ Advocacy	202	202	And I'm a trained "Steven Minister", which really helps in life - a lot. I feel like I've been really talking for three (3) days, but my normal thing is to try and listen to people. 'Cause I was very well-trained in that. That's something that this island actually needs. Like any place, most of the congregations are aging now. And to be able to take care of each other. That listening skill is really huge – I believe. Again, it's just saying, "I see you." It's that recognition of the other and giving them their opportunity. So...
●	Louise2	Resources/ Advocacy	212	212	I think that Larry Rasmussen's saying - that we no longer have the Lion's club, and the Kiwanis club, and the social clubs to lead us, that movements that are counter-capitalistic are best fostered in faith communities. And that our churches should be... you know, don't build another classroom – build a garden. Um, that that's a good place for people to learn. And we went through that in Los Alamos with the secretary saying, "We should be recycling all these bulletins with all this paper." And the council saying, "Oh, we can't afford that. We can't afford the recycling bin." And she said, "Then I'll pay for it. I can't sit here and see this happening." And so, that people need to stand up for that truth. It's not... we can't always pay attention to economics. We need to pay attention to what is right. And I get... you know, for me to decide what is right. It's not me that's deciding. It's my best educated guess. And, but it's not me that came up with the idea – certainly. And... that would be a good thing for the churches to do. Is to... when you send your children – if you are lucky enough to have children in your congregation – when you send them off during the sermon – they should be going to the garden.
●	Louise2	Resources/ Advocacy	220	220	Louise visiting Monrovia June 21 - She said she was reflecting on advocacy for her farmers and had written a letter for Ramon because another farm he was working for was withholding payment. She wrote it in his voice, but obviously the letter was not written by him. There was also talk of connecting him with a lawyer. But she wondered if those types of actions were what was needed.
●	Amber2	Resources/ Advocacy	114	114	I've often thought the farm could be a ministry place and sometimes more of a spiritual retreat type place where you, where you do invite somebody to just come walk the pace, walk the pace with you. Just walk through and then have little places where scripture you know, could fill in. But is that realistic? You know? Is that, is something like that, yeah, that seems like such a small, small place.

●	Amber2	Resources/ Advocacy	158	160	<p>So the church certainly isn't in the way of it. Again, I don't think they, but again, most people can't relate, like if you were talking, they can't relate to this way of life so it wouldn't, it wouldn't make a lot of sense to them. Again, I think it goes into, and this is our specific church, it goes into this discipleship idea and maybe moving out more to the applied theology and getting it in your life and leading the way as an example another way of doing things, another life, but the best way to do it is to come walk alongside it. You can lecture all you wan and say this is how things go, so um, you know and I know different churches that have done you know plots, garden plots on their sites and things. Things like that and our church isn't quite as much like that. You know, they have their own place of going out. I, Yeah, maybe it's just developing the conversation right now, the community, finding those who love growing and starting to connect some generations and skills and saying, you know, you see that happening in schools and colleges and just starting to enter, enter into that. But I guess that would be my first thought of just finding those who are already..</p> <p>K: likeminded</p> <p>A: likeminded, and then again, having something you can invite people into and so a place where you know you are actually growing something would be wonderful. So if a farm could be that place, you wouldn't have to do it all on the church campus. You know, you could come out and grow. I think like you're doing in some ways there's again, it's you living your life and having something to invite other people into. And I think generationally you'll find appeal. And even into the food then, and sharing meals and um, and all of that. Yeah, it's a big. I'm not sure I have any more on that. I haven't really thought about ....</p>
●	Amber2	Resources/ Advocacy	162	162	I think we have too many ideas and not enough you know, hands on type things, but how do you, people are so busy and there's so much going on, how do you break..
●	Judy2	Resources/ Advocacy	120	120	<p>o we try to do those things like those little picnics. The seniors have been out here a couple years where they bring those good potlucks and everything you know. So we've had them out. We've gotten a wagon and then they get rides out to the woods and that type of thing. They see the land and the old farmers just love that watching the corn grow seeing the corn grow and that type of thing you know. We've had that, we've hosted those a couple years. And we've probably can again now that we have the shed. 'Cause we just put the shed up this year and it's a better facility than the other one. Yeah, the other one the floor's a little crooked and stuff you know. And the seniors get a little bit, I understand, you have to be careful how you walk you know. So I could probably tell Pastor Dick that we have this now.</p>

●	Jeannette2	Resources/ Advocacy	123	123	I would say large picture, big picture, the reason why I am such a big fan of the Abundant Table beyond the obvious ya know we get vegetables from them, they pay me, is they're one of the first sustainable farms that sees sustainability in a bigger than just ecological sustainability but more, there's people harvesting that food that is grown without pesticides and what are we to do with them? What about when they get sick? What about...so, I've met a lot of farmers who focus so much on caring for the land but not for the very present people who are on their land too. So, I, I, I think there has been so much government bureaucratic action on making like USDA um, improving the organic legislature and surrounding that, but I don't see as much happening with the um, the the, the sustainability of the people who are working for the people who are growing organic vegetables. There's this like invisible line there where compost and no-till and chickens and ya know, there's been so much thought put into creating this integrated food system on a piece of land, but then like, still high rank folks for a day laborer paying them practically nothing and not caring for their bodies in the right way. So that's my biggest wish, but then again if you ask me if the follow-up question is how do I change that, I have no idea.
●	Jeannette2	Resources/ Advocacy	125	125	I think because we have a bit of a race problem and socio-economic problem in America. So it's possible to drive down the 101 and see people bent over and picking in a 90 degree day and not feel conflict in your soul about that. Because they are dressed in raggedy clothes, um, or because they came here illegally or whatever. So I think there's just a lot of rhetoric that we have grown up within that prevents us from realizing that this is an actual problem.
●	Jeannette2	Resources/ Advocacy	132	132	try to spread the word about how like buying organic isn't enough. If your goal of buying organic food is to, I don't know, feel good about your food choices, it's it might be more helpful to support small, local farms that are doing community based work, ya know, and to put money there instead of going through a bank business like Whole Foods or Traders Joes. While that is really good, (tone shifts to understanding), it's so hard, it's so hard... there are folks who, ya know, I don't ever want to dissuade anyone from eating more vegetables or taking care of their bodies, but um, just like for people who have gotten to the place where they would like to support food, go to small, community based farms instead of going through – it just makes such a difference. It's it's a little more work for a vastly different experience.

●	Jeannette2	Resources/ Advocacy	136	136	our job in a sense is very simple because luckily food is delicious (Laughter) and vegetables taste really good, um, and they're fun and they're beautiful so I know Erynn, our farm educator does a lot of work to get people cooking and to get them interacting with vegetables in a way and educating folks like especially from a young age what it means to to eat vegetables and how it's – it's kind of hard, but it's also a lot of fun, and I think a lot of the, um, typical marketing that is used right now is very directed towards one group of people.
●	Jeannette2	Resources/ Advocacy	141	141	more of a presence in places ...that are less white, so um going to farmer's markets or approaching the CSA boxes in places that are more um, ... ya know not in that direction, not in that direction, towards that crowd I was talking about earlier and possibly what we're trying right now is to or bring a more diverse group err produce variety in our CSA boxes right now to appeal to different demographics. So, We're putting more corn, potatoes, herbs call pazoote epazote and lamb's quarter and perslane purslane which is heavily used in Mexican cooking. Trying to get those into our boxes so that when we bring it they're not like, "What? I don't want chard." Stuff that we grew because I looked through a seed catalogue and I was like, I wanna eat that. (laughter) Ya know, how do make it more.. and we grow a lot of bok choy, pok choypak choi and tatsoi (?) .. just trying to diversify what goes into the boxes.
●	Jeannette2	Resources/ Advocacy	143	143	I think I would answer that by saying like people who are from the county who can make legislature that will directly affect our county, but my girlfriend who is a communication and marketing major would say like, a really cool celebrity (laughter) to be able to market to the masses, and have them transform, so I'm kind of torn between the two cuz I see the benefits of both sides. I think working with the local county, Ventura County would be great, especially surrounding organizations like CAUSE and their farm worker bill of rights.
●	Jeannette2	Resources/ Advocacy	147	147	For Ventura County and it may be Santa Barbara too, I think, but it's, CAUSE stands for Center for ... I'm not sure. But they are trying to get this bill passed through the county that has 4 simple points on it. I think it's like prevention of wage theft, having a legal, legal protection for pregnant women to be able to refrain from working with pesticides but still keep their job, access to shade during breaks, access to clean bathrooms, and breaktimes starting when workers arrives at the break station and at the break stations because a lot of them are really far away, so by the time they get to it break is over. So simple stuff, you can see how the organization has been encouraging us to use channels such as calling your councilperson and emailing and social media – trying to get a change.



●	Jeannette2	Resources/ Advocacy	151	151	how to get the Episcopalian church, considering we are an Episcopalian organization,... because we depend on them because we are Episcopalian, like we depend on it spiritually, it's such a huge part of our faith component, how to also like financially or economically use them as a resource. So I know we have gotten a lot of grants through them, but just on the smaller scale, how could we work with local Episcopalian churches to partner um, to either get food to people who need it through their churches or use their churches like a CSA pick up site and have them support their local farm in a very meaningful way?
●	Reyna	Resources/ Advocacy	27	27	And really I think an important educational pieces is to let them know that if you don't give yourself value, no one else is going to value you. That may be one way to solve it.
●	Reyna	Resources/ Advocacy	29	29	Giving a little bit of more emphasis on value in what you do. Because when I first got to this farm I had this same pattern as everyone else. So I felt like she was the same as everybody else – white people are more educated people, that they're just in a better place. Ya know, just accepted this position of lowering the head. I felt like that maybe the farmworkers just don't bring that value, the self value. So when I came to this farm and everyone would say, "Oh thank you, thank you so much," I would wonder why people were thanking me when she was just doing what she had to do. So this has a lot to do with self-esteem. And then when you really kind of realize and feel like you do have a value and.... So I do have value and deserve to ask for more and so even though I'm brown.
●	Reyna	Resources/ Advocacy	29	29	It's a problem sometimes with the bathrooms, like people who work in the office, they get nice bathrooms and it's tiled and then the people who work all day in the fields in the sun sometimes it can be 2 weeks before they clean the bathrooms. And so you know, I would be like, "Hey Sarah," and send text and send reminders about the issues in the bathroom and then I would tell the other farmers you have to talk to your bosses about it, you have to tell them. But they would say, "No, it's okay. We don't use the bathrooms that much." But then I would say "No that's not right. They're washing those other bathrooms all the time, they can wash these ones too." And that's what I like about the church is that you can really give value to people. We're all one body and we all have different jobs, but we all are one.
●	Sarah	Resources/ Advocacy	97	97	Farm Bill in general is something important to follow on many levels and then the food... I think it's like the nutrition and education, there's something where farm to school fits in.
●	Sarah	Resources/ Advocacy	99	99	another bill that's coming up in education where um, food dollars could potentially, I'm not sure, but it got me thinking what are all the legislation where potential funding can kind of fit, or infrastructure, um, so it just kind of being aware of what policies are out there. We're not as involved in policy on our end, but it's definitely something that we recognize that we're impacted by.

●	Sarah	Resources/ Advocacy	101	101	it makes such a big difference as people get to know their food system. Figuring out how to educate yourself and this is something we've thought about doing with churches – how to break down a meal, like you have a potluck, can you breakdown where everything came from? Beginning to know your kind of global and local food system is really important to understanding where the barriers and breakdowns are and where the positive lights are. And then that would hopefully inspires folks to get to know a farmer or a rancher or an urban gardener and being to kind of explore what their life is like and how they're trying to survive. I think getting involved in anything around farm worker issues is really important and there are definitely organizations in different regions that address that but that's connected to immigration and economics and just recognizing how interconnected and just trying to figure out what organizations in one's community are working on these things.
●	Sarah	Resources/ Advocacy	105	105	context of our county, if we had all the time in the world I'd love to do a campaign to talk to retiring farmers to convince them why it would be so important to maybe gift some of their land to up and coming growers versus selling it all off. I know they're under pressure to figure out how to keep their world working financially. Ya know the time to explore, to create land trusts. Ya know things like that I think do make a difference. I think figuring out different investment structures, but recognizing the farmer can't be the only one leading the charge for each of these pieces; it really takes the community and other people and other organizations to invest their time and energy. Being able to create more opportunities and land potential. Growers, there's only 6% of farmers are under the age of 36 which is, I mean, and most of them are quitting at some point, so if it doesn't change it's just gonna be consolidated, we're just gonna eat consolidated food, which is pretty much what we do already, but like most of the organic, even organic is mostly consolidated now.
●	Sarah	Resources/ Advocacy	111	111	I definitely think we want to be an example or a leader in kind of the religious communities around seeing this as not just a trend or um, ... a side project but that it's a core narrative that we would like to see religious communities, specifically the church, pick up and really want them to know and about, how we can, why it's a core narrative.
●	Sarah	Resources/ Advocacy	113	113	I mean it's uniquely we work within the Episcopal church, but feeling like that ya know it's really a broader conversation. Um, Ya know I think within the academic world talking about wanting the stories that are coming up from literally from the ground are informing any sort of theory that is being developed around food sustainability, spirituality, theology, but I mean secular or religions. So often it's not connected or it's a story that becomes like a thing um, but its different. But I just think actually the biggest thing is recognizing every story is so different. Yeah, and then, I think the small farming comm... like really wanting to like, really wanting to work with other small farmers to figure out what long term sustainability and viability looks like. And then eaters, eaters should know. All eaters should know.

●	Sarah	Resources/ Advocacy	119	119	National Young Farmer's Coalition and they just send emails. I think it's just really kind of trying – it's when the advocacy plan is connected to the real needs that need to be met that that's where the traction comes. I know here locally there's a farm worker bill that's coming and that they're trying to get the country to pass and that they've done a good job of meeting with farmers and getting people involved and I think that is it's that connection, yeah, that relationship and showing, seeing that potential of the community investment might be.
●	Sarah	Resources/ Advocacy	121	121	They want to at least move it a statewide conversation but felt like it's easier to pass something at the country level and then as an example and then to, and our farm and Phil's farm, we're the only two farmers who have signed on so far, but they've interviewed several others but it's controversial. And it's coming from a controversial organization too, which we like them, but I recognize in politics things are left or right and people don't see in the middle.
●	Sarah	Resources/ Advocacy	133	133	I feel strongly that like churches, especially churches within the mainline protestant church, there's lots of money in the pews, it's less and less but it's still lots of money in land and I feel strongly that they should be supporting farmers with, as much, within their communities as much as they can whether they're faith based or they're not. Like I think an investment in the people who are growing food in their community whether they eat it or they donate it to a food bank, but that I just think there is no reason not to and really feel like churches should probably connect themselves to some sort of agricultural community if they can.
●	Sarah	Resources/ Advocacy	135	135	well visit a farm. I think, get involved in a CSA or if you as a church community don't feel you can consume all the vegetables, purchase CSA shares for a local food bank so that the farm, so that the food, the food, the people at the food bank can get fresh local vegetables, but the farm also gets the income they need to be sustainable.
●	Alice	Community/ Neighbors	5	5	a wonderful farmer, Gary Guthrie, who also had been my spiritual director and just amazing person
●	Alice	Relationship/ web\animals	20	20	And trying to have this huge amount of biodiversity in the things we plant and in the things that we want to let be. But then, like, just feeling like, well we have rabbit habitat everywhere and – how do we keep the rabbits from eating everything and... I don't know.
●	Alice	Community/ Neighbors\ Partnership	27	27	Also, Practical Farmers of Iowa, I feel like is really... I mean WFAN is cool, but Practical Farmers of Iowa has been a much stronger influence in my life. I have gone to... I mean, I remember going to a WFAN thing in like 2001 or something.

●	Alice	Community/ Neighbors\ Partnership	28	28	Anyway, the connection of people in Practical Farmers of Iowa and the... I don't know... they really helped me get connected with a lot of great farmers. I mean, Gary Guthrie has been - he's a great spiritual, like, yeah, he also comes from a Catholic and Mennonite background and he does Spiritual Direction, he was in the Iowa - he and his wife worked for the Iowa Peace Network, and they worked for the Mennonite Service in El Salvador and Honduras, I think. [30:00 I] Anyway, they're really an awesome couple. I guess, more personal than famous people.
●	Alice	Community/ Neighbors	31	31	We've been, for the past eight years, having a round-table and a pot-luck every Friday in the summer, and then once a month in the winter. And, that might change this year. We have a pot-luck dinner and we have a discussion or activity around topics of the environment, or spirituality, or social justice, or farming - so, it's pretty broad, but it's not everything on the planet. Our attendance last year was pretty low on those, so we're trying about, like, is there - you know, what is the point of those things? And, can we be meeting that... is there not a desire for what we're trying to accomplish? And, could we be joining other people who are doing those kinds of things? Or, could we be hosting events that are more what people want?
●	Alice	Community/ Neighbors	56	56	So, we bought this land from Joyce and her daughter-in-law - so Gladys and her daughter-in-law - Joyce. So Joyce's husband Larry, whose kinda a pain-in-the-ass and sometimes this strange blessing - but anyway, they own 160 acres. So, they are still our neighbors on the east, the north, and the west. So, we bought 11 acres of their hundred and sixty. And we've always had permission to be on all the land across the road. So, half of their land is over here and halve of it's over there. And then our neighbor to the north, Tim, runs this land, and we also have his permission to be on there. And he used to graze cattle, but now he mostly just keeps that land for hunting rights.
●	Alice	Relationship/ web\animals	70	70	So, I've never had - I never had a pet. I learned - I don't know - I never... I didn't grow up with any exposure to farm animals - I'm not, like, a farm kid. And, I mean, I had dogs growing up... So, I've been really slow to have any animals on our farm. Collette was - had a lot of experience with animals. And that was gonna be really, I think, great for our farm - and then she decided to get married. She was like, "Should I get chickens... or get married?" [laughter]
●	Alice	Relationship/ web\animals	72	72	so, we were really slow to introduce animals here. 'Cause I think it's a just a - one, it's just a huge responsibility; and I think everything is life and death on the farm. Every plant, but, I don't know, I feel like an animal is a bigger responsibility than, I don't know, than a tree? You can't - you know you could neglect a tree for a whole year and it would probably be fine.

●	Alice	Relationship/ web\animals	73	73	I do think it would be good for our farms' sustainability to have animals. It's interesting. So, we have a lot of deer. A lot of rabbits. And we have a lot of – we have bees. We've always had bees on the farm. We have been participating in pollinator projects for the past three years. And we're gonna do another one this year. Each year is a different project. And, it'd be nice if they were the same people working with us, but it's... Every year it's a different project. But I think we really care about what - just the whole ecosystem. So, all the native – you know just everything – I don't know, like, the – you know I guess I'm not a big fan of squash bugs and cucumber beetles. But I am a big fan of a healthy ecosystem where the population of those are still there but not, like - I don't need to wipe out cucumber beetles and squash bugs. I just want them to not eat all of my plants.
●	Alice	Relationship/ web\animals	75	75	so for the deer we have this electric fence which works pretty well. We take it down in the winter and put it back in the spring. It's a three-strand. And it's like, the deer can definitely go through, but we try to get them trained in the spring. We put some scent on it and get them to zap their noses. It really cuts down on the deer a lot. We do a lot of fencing. So, I don't know, we've got a good sustainable system. And they love to eat our trees in the winter. They love to eat everything in the summer. The rabbits love to eat our trees in the winter. Hey love to eat a third of everything in the summer. So, we're hoping the dog can help with the rabbits and the deer. We'll see. The dog is a big challenge right now. He's a blessing. And I think he's good for me and Nate in a lot of ways, but he's been really a challenge. So, I hope that he works out. But, I think he should be helpful. I - you know one thing the deer do – they love our cover crops – in the winter – and I have no problem with them eating our cover crops. And they do a lot of pooping. I feel like it's sort of rotational grazing. It's easier than hauling manure. So, that's really a nice benefit. But yeah, I don't want them eating our trees.

●	Alice	Relationship/ web\animals	80	82	<p>Right, so the deer fence helps a lot. So we fence certain sections – like the low chicken wire. So, there’s a section down there – like all the Brassicas – well, there’s a little fenced in section up there. So there are things that are in really high demand or rabbits – so, we’ll fence them when they’re young. And as they get bigger the... yeah, and the rabbits have been getting worse – because we’re here. Like, the rabbits have been terrible in town because there’s so many people. I mean, the rabbits are safe because they don’t have predators. When we first lived here, no one had lived here for a couple years. So, the coyotes were running right through so the rabbit population was pretty low. So, hopefully... our cat is good at catching babies – bunnies – and eating them. I don’t know. I mean, we do need to start hunting, I think, but again, like... Nate’s dad is a super big hunter, but Nate, I don’t know. I mean, I don’t have any practice hunting. So, I’d have to learn how to kill things and butcher them. It’s not like, the most exciting... [laughter]</p> <p>KR: But, you’d be okay doing it?</p> <p>A: I’m not morally opposed.</p>
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●	Alice	Relationship/ web\animals	82	88	<p>I was trying to learn how to butcher a chicken – ‘cause we had a sick chicken and one of our farm team members came and was like, “I’ll kill the chicken,” and I was like, “I’ll watch so I can learn.” And it was, like, really hard. And I like...</p> <p>KR: Yeah, you gotta do more than one to learn that.</p> <p>A: And I was like – I was gonna faint. I just didn’t expect it. I got this huge rush of blood to my head. And I got really light-headed. And I was like, “oh, this is not gonna be easy...” If I’m gonna kill things. So, I don’t know. Yeah. I mean, clearly it would be a good thing to be able to do – like, in theory, I could be like, lovingly, respectfully, killing something – but I don’t know, it’s hard. I mean, I’m a pacifist, I don’t believe in like... I’m like an anarchist. I don’t believe in domination of any kind or violence of any kind. But it’s okay if I kill an animal... maybe that doesn’t make any sense. But... I do like to eat meat. I don’t know. I feel like, in theory it’s alright for me to hunt things and eat them. I just...</p> <p>KR: No, that’s great, I mean, I understand - that tension, I think, it’s different when you talk to a vegetarian who’s like, “I’m a vegetarian, I don’t want to kill things.” And then you talk to someone who’s a vegetable farmer and... One of the other farmers said, “The very first thing I had to do was go around and kill all these cucumber beetles.” This was in California. And she was like, “There’s killing in farming. No matter what you want to think it is.” So, she stopped being a vegetarian after that. So that’s in, like, everyone’s stories. Is – how do you handle this tension of – you live on the land. You’re part of it. So...</p> <p>A: Yeah. It’s a really interesting thing, though. In human psychology because, I think about, killing bugs. Like, I remember having to kill cutworms on the potatoes and feel like we collected them and we put them in a little cup and we threw them in a lake. And then, I was on another farm where we were squishing bugs with our fingers! Which is like, it’s way harder to do than picking them off and putting them in a little container. You can put ‘em in a little container and feed ‘em to your chickens. Which is like, actually, pretty cool, I feel good about that. Or you could spray them with a chemical and then they’re all like, they kinda disappear, or like... you don’t even see their carcasses. I feel like they just stop coming there or, I don’t know... they’re dead somewhere. Or...</p> <p>KR: The a-bomb for bugs...</p> <p>A: Exactly. And so I think about, I think about warfare and I think about the drones we’re using and the way that we wage war. You know, how we – one, we don’t want to think about them as</p>
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human beings, but we're like, really want to distance ourselves from the people that we're killing and I don't... I understand it. I'm just like, it's really hard to squish bugs [30:00 II] with my hands. It's much easier to throw them in the lake. You know, and I'm just like, yeah... It's easier to gas people than to like, kill them. I don't know. It is a sort of brutal world. And yeah, I don't like killing anything. And I don't have to do it very much. I mean, I kill a lot of plants, I guess. I do a lot of weeding, but we don't kill a lot of bugs on our farm.



●	Alice	Community/ Neighbors	90	90	I feel like I'm involved in lots of communities. In lots of different pockets of community. The thing that I think, part of why I wanted to be here and not someplace else, was that the farmer community here is so great. That they people who are farming... and I guess, sort-of, the local food activists, or people who are doing things like organizing farmers' markets and, but... mostly of the farmers. I feel like the... Anyway, I still think that that's really true. And when I think about my community that's really strong - I think about farmers. And then I feel really lucky to know a lot of farmers who have more experience, or who have similar experience, or new farmers. And to be able to get together, learn from each other, call people – I feel like there's a number of farmers I can just call and ask for all sorts of advice. And they will just share really openly. And so, Practical farmers
●	Alice	Community/ Neighbors\ Partnership	90	92	<p>How much do you know about Practical Farmers of Iowa?</p> <p>KR: Nothing</p> <p>A: Anyway, they're great! They were founded – I think that they just celebrated thirty years? They were founded by sort-of sustainable famers, who were interested in doing on-farm research, that were of a rigorous standard to be useful – to have relevant results - but to be doing research about things that the universities and the big companies weren't doing. About the kind of farming – the scale of farming that they were on and about more sustainable environmental practices. And so, that has been the core of PFI – is this - farmers, together doing farm research and then sharing – just really openly sharing. Sort-of the practical details of how they're farming and what they've tried. So, they do these replicated and randomized trials. We've been doing one or two or three PFI experiments every year – this is probably our second year. And usually they're being replicated – so you're doing three or four reps on your own farm, but they're being replicated on a number of other farms also, at the same time, so you can then compile your results and get more relevant data. But, they do other things. They host, like - 90 field days, and some social events, and they have a conference, and there was a time when they were doing cluster groups. So, I was meeting once a month with other similar farmers in our county – I think – they have a beginning farmer program where they match you with a mentor and you make a business plan and you save money and they match it. Anyway, they do lots of great things. But I feel like that has really helped the Iowa farm community to be strong and transparent. I guess, or, to really value that open sharing of information.</p>



Alice

Community/  
Neighbors

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How much do you know about Practical Farmers of Iowa?

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●	Alice	Community/ Neighbors	93	96	<p>what's your experience being a woman in the field of agriculture in the U.S.? So, I feel like that kind-of touches on – has PFI been an open place for women to get...</p> <p>A: yeah. So, I just... just last weekend? I think it was last weekend, I just went to visit Susan Youts and Carmen Flack. And Susan has been, I feel like, a part of PFI since the beginning, and a board member. She's been a part of PFI as long as I've known they've existed. So, I guess that's like 15 years now. And Carmen is... Susan's retiring and Carmen's taking over her farm. So, I just went to visit their farm for the first time and so, I would say, um, Susan, Laura Krause, Angela Todesco, Jan Levy – those are the people that come to mind – Lana, Lana Nachtoogal, I guess, she's, she and her husband, Joe, farm – that was a place I recommended you staying at if you were looking for a place to stay – She's a really great farmer too. But, I don't know why, I think of those other women, maybe as, they're kind of like the head farmers at their farms. And, yeah, I feel like they have a really strong place in PFI – when I first knew PFI, all their staff were men, but their executive director has been a woman the past 10 years, I think. I think that's a great place for women farmers. I think it's a great community. It's really supportive. I think definitely it is challenging to be a woman farmer – in Iowa – but not so much in that community of – of vegetable farmers, or market farmers, or... yeah, I definitely feel like in the past 20 years there's been this more of this local foods movement and there have been more people farming outside of the box. And there are a lot of women in that community. But there are a lot of conventional corn and soybean farmers or cattle, and pig, and chicken... and corn and soybean farmers.</p> <p>And it is hard to... yeah, it's just... it's a little bit of a hard culture to be navigating... to be negotiating with the co-ops and the sprayers. And yeah, just to be... people aren't rude to me – I feel like – except for Larry – Larry is... I think Larry is rude to everyone, I think. I think respects me actually, but, yeah, I sometimes I guess I feel like people humor me. And it's this weird thing because, it's been nice - I think every year Nate's taking on more and more leadership, and more and more ownership, and more and more responsibility on the farm. But it's definitely – a lot of parts of farming are very much a man's world kind-of place. And so, I don't know... It's just this weird thing that, you know, part of it I feel like is good manners and etiquette – like, it's not... I don't... you know, there's women on these men who are farming are married to women who do a lot of things, and have as much at stake in these things, but like, I wouldn't go negotiate with one of the farm-wives about a property boundary, or spraying, or if I needed somebody to, like, you know, do some machine work, or... and it ... [40:00]</p> <p>And maybe Nate should be doing that... maybe Nate should be talking to the man over there. It's this weird thing where I'm like – my husband is this crazy feminist – where he never wants to, like, you know, ever, like, have... you know, just super conscientious and I don't know... it's just, it's a weird culture and I don't want to buy into it – it's just sometimes I wonder if in some ways</p>
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people would respect my husband less because... I don't know – one thing that was really nice – Nate worked for one of the neighbors who has a landscaping business and runs a number of farms – and Nate worked for one season and I thought it was a really great – partly because Nate doesn't know as many people in the neighborhood and he doesn't know that much about farming and I feel like all the guys that live out here – they grew up on farms, they know about machinery, they know about animals, they just know a lot of things – and we don't know any of those things, really. And, like, it's hard because I want to be like, well you don't respect me because I'm a woman... but I actually don't know anything about all these things – I don't know anything about all this tractor equipment and... I do know how to grow a lot of good food, but I don't know a lot of the things. So - you're kind of, like, rolling your eyes 'cause I'm upset that you're spraying my stuff – which is, I don't know... so it was nice because I feel like one - Nate got to know a bunch of people on a bunch of the farms and he got to learn about a lot of equipment and, like, he – the guy he worked for is really great – and, like, I feel like people really respect Nate when they know him. 'Cause he's just like a really good, honest, hard-working... Like, I feel like if you're a man you respect Nate because he has all the best man qualities and, like, all the best woman qualities – like, he's a really good guy – but he's not assertive. He's not out there making a show of himself. And I feel like, I sometimes worry that – people that don't know him, aren't going to respect him. You know and I don't want to like, keep him from having this, whatever this is- this rural male relationship that people have – like, I want him to have an opportunity to, like, talk to the farmer neighbors in away that, like, they're not going to talk to me. And, there's nothing I'm gonna be able to do – sure, I can have a ... I can negotiate with them about something and they're not gonna disrespect me, but they're not gonna be comfortable talking to me, like they're gonna be comfortable talking to another man-farmer. And I feel like, maybe I should let my husband do that so he can like, I don't know. I don't know! It's just weird, I guess.

●	Alice	Community/ Neighbors	108	112	<p>our CSA members are great. I think we don't know them as well as we could. Some people – in the beginning – joined our CSA because they knew us and because they believed in our mission. I think pretty much everyone joins our CSA because they like our mission, or because they can't afford to be in somebody else's CSA, or because you know, somebody personally – they know somebody who is a member or who is involved with our farm. So, we do have, I feel like, a pretty positive connection with everybody that's a member. So, we have people that are paying members. We have people that are gift members. We have people that are working members. We have people that are, like, substitute working members... but like, they can't commit to coming all the time, but they can come sometimes or as a substitute for people. We have open volunteer times. Like, we will have tomorrow afternoon – so, that might be different people that come, it might be nobody that comes – it's always a little bit confusing. And then we have farm-team members. So, these are people who are committed to the farm, like the mission and the work, and then they are usually making a personal commitment usually of a year or so – or more – to be involved in – not necessarily, like, day-to-day decisions, but the ... it's sort of like a board of directors, I guess, but we make decisions by consensus.</p> <p>And then, people on our farm team are on committees so they might be a part of the day-to-day decisions on the committees they're on. So, like, we have an animal committee, or a building committee, or a gardening committee... or we had a perma-culture and prairie committee... I'm tryin' to think... who... our committees have not... we had, like, a pot-luck and event committee – so then, those groups might meet together and, like, so our consensus process has always been really easy – and either that's 'cause I'm just, like, dominating and everybody wants to do what I want. But I think... or - I think it's partly because of our committee process. I think the people that care a lot about something are making the plans on a smaller scale and then they're just bringing their bigger decisions to the group. And that, generally, people approve things. Like, and the other reason that our consensus process might work well is that people don't care very much. So, like, people who were on our farm team, aren't that invested in, like, really a lot of the decisions. It's sort of like, "okay, that's good – sounds fine" – they're not necessarily gonna have to, like, deal with consequences. And also our interns are a part of that farm team and they are a part of our consensus. And, anybody who wants to be – can be. We haven't had any problem with having that open of a policy about being on our farm team.</p> <p>Yeah, and I guess there are other people out there also that are just, like, maybe extended community people who just, like, really like us. And maybe come to our events, sometimes give us money, sometimes just, I don't know, they're just like our friends I guess. But, they're not just personal friends, I guess they're like, friends of the farm. And anyway, I don't know exactly what your question meant; but... how does it all work? Sometimes not very well. Sometimes amazing! Sometimes more amazing than you can imagine. And, sometimes it's like ridiculously</p>
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complicated. And sometimes, just like, no one's there when you need them. You know, we're a hundred percent volunteer... you know, Nate and I are full-time volunteers. Our interns are gonna be working thirty hours a week.

KR: Okay, and they get paid, or they don't get paid?

A: They don't get paid. They get room and board. And hopefully a positive experience in their life. You know, and again, it's philosophical, and it's not, like, a money-saving strategy. Again, it's part of this, like, this [50:00] Catholic Worker idea of, like, you know, what if we work because work was meaningful. And, what if we worked because we wanted to, like, be a positive force in the world... and what if we all were doing that? What if that was what our economics was about, and it was about competition and exchange of currency, but just about, like – so, it's this Gift-Economy model. And yeah, I have no idea if it's gonna work, and it's like, yeah... it's not gonna kill me to try. Maybe it is! I don't know, but, yeah. I think it's worth trying.

●	Alice	Relationship/ web	126	126	I feel like my faith is connected to everything. It's connected to everything that I do. And I feel like that Spirit is connected to everything that is. I feel like one of my missions for the farm, and it is one of the missions of the farm – is to provide, like, this open, but encouraging spiritual space for people. And I think that's really important, and again – not in that sort-of religious sense, but in that all-encompassing sense that I think a lot of people have a spiritual hunger. And I don't have an agenda for what they should believe, but I really want to, I really want to encourage them to explore what it is they do believe. And listen to each other – like what – it's like I want them to expand what they believe, I guess – not necessarily to be what I believe, but just... I just want to challenge them, I guess.
●	Alice	Relationship/ web	130	132	<p>KR: So, in those moments when you see God, or the Spirit, in everything in this place – what does that look like to you?</p> <p>A: What does it look like to me? Um... Just so many different things it could look like. You know, it can look like the sky, or it can look like frost, or dew in the morning. You know, it can... it can definitely look like watching someone who – it's like – watching people learn. Especially if you get to be with them long enough when they're learning, when they, like, start having confidence, and creativity, and ideas, and leadership – it's exciting to see that. For me, like, going down, and going out by myself in the woods. And, like, lying on the ground – I definitely like praying lying down, or meditating, or whatever that... like, I just feel really close to everything – connected...</p> <p>Yeah, you know, I mean, it just... yeah, so many different things - somebody laughing, or crying, being really real. I like it when people are being really real, or really open, or vulnerable...</p>
●	Alice	Relationship/ web	139	141	it was some discussion between a number of people, but for me – again, I really think seeds are just amazing and I - in the Bible - like, the, you know... they use of the mustard seed is – yeah, this idea of this thing that's so small and can, either become so great - you know, so like – such a big – the biggest plant and the birds are roosting in it, and it's sort of like this home for everything it's just... but it starts, or this idea that if you have just this tiny bit of faith you can move mountains – and, I mean for me that's encouraging – you know – and that's all we have, I guess. Like, all we're going to be able to do in life is these little things – and it's encouraging that, like, you know – I'm not gonna have this great amount of faith, or this huge, amazing, like, you know – I don't know – like, I'm not gonna be in a history book 'cause I've done this amazing thing
●	Louise2	Community/ Neighbors	3	3	I started taking classes from The Kona Coffee Farmers Association. We read books, articles and tried to ready ourselves to be farmers.

●	Louise2	Community/ Neighbors\ Partnership	18	18	And um, and we can, our love of that is like – and you keep hearing me say, “our”, ‘cause Bob is really in this together (laughter). And we both have the same goal.
●	Louise2	Relationship/ web\animals	19	19	Also the pigs that were brought here are a huge danger so eventually, we managed to get the farm fenced. ‘Cause you cannot grow those native plants without fencing, because the pigs will come in. They’re like candy to cattle, and pigs, and goats, and sheep. And so, you have to exclude the undulates because there were none here before man came, and man kept bringing more and that was one of the things that destroyed the native plantings.
●	Louise2	Relationship/ web	25	25	that nature is, is the place where I experience God most. And that it has provided me the most comfort at the very worst times in my life. I remember the very worst thing that ever happened to me, the only thing I could do, the only thing I could think of to take away the pain and the feeling of just utter desolation was to lie down flat on the ground under a tree and hug the earth. And so I feel that I’m just a part of creation. And that’s a very profound feeling. It’s not that it’s my job to name everything and to have dominion over it. It is that I’m just a small part of creation. And that’s really part of my theology. And so the idea of going back to the garden, is something that brings me closer to God. More than anything else, really. And once you, it’s a good place to get your grounding.
●	Louise2	Relationship/ web	26	26	You try to grow these plants and you find out, well, they have just a hard a time as humans do. And, I don’t like to interfere with them too much, but I really respect them and just the beauty. It just amazes me. The variety and the, it makes me humble. And I think that’s a good thing. That brings me closer to God too. So, it is a very faith-based endeavor. It has been from the very beginning.
●	Louise2	Relationship/ web	28	28	I remember walking out of high school one time and going to the forest that surrounded our high school campus. It was in the middle of the school day and I was like, “I’ve had it. I’m outta here.” I just walked out the door and went to a tree and hugged it. It just, so they’ve always been a comfort for me. They show up in my re-occurring dreams. A tree from my childhood shows up in dreams. And so, I don’t know what all that means, I just know that it’s the right connection for me.
●	Louise2	Relationship/ web\animals	33	33	Bob logs what we see, in terms of if we see the Hawaiian bat, or and io – the Hawaiian hawk.
●	Louise2	Relationship/ web\animals	42	42	And it’s true the wild turkey’s will eat the avocados. They go on the ground and that just happens sometimes
●	Louise2	Community/ Neighbors\ Partnership	48	48	it really helps if Bob takes the tractor and he can load the forklift or the bucket - with coffee and move it to their trucks. ‘cause at the end of the day, after you’ve picked all day, the last thing you want to do is throw hundred pound sacks of coffee over your shoulder and drag it up the hill.



●	Louise2	Relationship/ web	60	61	<p>My experience with the... I'm not sure what you mean by that but, um, I like this land. (laughter) and my surroundings are very important to me. So I don't really want them to be separated from me. I see them as a huge part of my life and the best way I can describe it is that I sometimes, when we're in a... When I'm hiking with a group of people, and people are talking about... they'll go, "Oh, remember the time we were in Australia and we were at that, you know..."</p> <p>And it's sort-of like, No! you're here. You're now. You're home. Why are you missing this? Why are you missing this connection? It's so, it's really important to me to be where I am. And to be thinking about where I am. And of course my thoughts might go off, but the whole idea of feeling like you're home, where you are. Is very important to me. And not mind tripping off to someplace else. So, being present to where you are is really important. 'Cause I feel that I miss so much if I'm not mindful of where I am. And so I would rather hike in silence.</p>
●	Louise2	Relationship/ web	64	64	<p>This is one of my special lands. I am open to all, to all lands. To be present there. But this is certainly my home. Right now. And yeah, and I'm still learning it. In Sand County Almanac he talks about, and in Pilgrim at Tinker Creek same thing – they talk about slowing down enough to see the bugs, see how the water runs. You talked today about the clouds moving faster than the water and watching the clouds - just watching the clouds. Oh Bob will tell you how I just sit here and watch the clouds just march down the coast. And, I was sitting here last night and you know I was saying, "Oh, they're not low enough yet..." And so it's important to me to be able to be a "weather witch". To learn where I think the water is under the ground. To learn what the sky looks like, what weather does that portend? So it's that whole ecosystem. It's the whole thing. To slow down enough in my humanness to realize that there is something bigger going on here and I'm just a really small part of it. And it really is my, I feel like, my job, to watch, and to become in tune with it - so that you can live in harmony with it. I mean that to me is such a gift. I mean, I spent years at a desk in front of a computer, helping people. That's great too, but this is what feeds my soul. The people do too. They really do. They really matter to me. But, for me – you spoke about how you wrote a book about how to not just take care of everybody else, but to take care of yourself. This is what takes care of me. To be nurtured by nature really takes care of me.</p>

●	Louise2	Relationship/ web\animals	66	70	<p>Years ago on this farm, I was out walking amongst the coffee trees and I was actually weeding, I was pulling weeds. And I went under a coffee tree and I, there was this nest that was the size of this placemat. And it had like 16 eggs in it. It was a turkey nest. And I was so in awe of that. I mean, the only thing you can't keep out with a fence, well, there are lots of things – mice, rats, the ... what are those other infernal things?</p> <p>KR: The muskrats?</p> <p>L: From India... oh, I can't come up with the name, but I'll remember in a minute... You cannot keep out rodents and you cannot keep out birds. And so the birds are just a delight. Our turkeys – we watched them nest last year when our youngest daughter was here. And, the fact that they feel at home here and that they walk around and you can walk through the coffee fields and you'll come upon them and you can just talk to them, it's like, "Hey, girls! Didn't know you were here." And the pheasants. The Kalijpheasants, the same thing. And they get used to you. And they don't feel threatened. And they'll walk off. And they're doing their own thing. To hear them moving around the coffee field is a really neat thing. Really neat. I don't have any need for pets, because those wild birds are here. Mongoose.</p> <p>KR: Mongoose – that's what they are.</p> <p>L: We trap the mongoose. We actually trap and kill because they are a huge danger to the birds. The wild chickens, they eat those. Our turkeys will hatch out like 13 eggs and a week later they're down to two (2), two (2) "turklets" we call them (laughter). And we found out that chickens can count, but turkeys can't. Because they don't seem to notice that kids are missing. But they provide incredible entertainment for us. Besides their gobbling in the morning, and in the evening. They roost up in the big Ohia trees. And so they fly up there every night. You hear this big fluttering of wings and they sit up there and then they come down in the morning and they do all their gobbling before they come down in the morning. So they're extremely entertaining. I'm conscious as I walk through the field of all the little skinks. The little black lizard-like creatures that are part of that whole ecosystem. I don't know what they're doing, but they're doing stuff down there. They're eating bugs and the turkeys eat the bugs and the... So they're definitely part of that ecosystem that makes everything grow. They also provide fertilizer – a small amount – but right under where they roost, you find a lot scat on the ground.</p>
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●	Louise2	Relationship/ web\animals	72	72	The other thing is the Earth Worms. Oh my gosh! When we first bought this land and we started planting things. We were like, "Look!" Every time we turn a rock over and find an earth worm, it was like so exciting, it was like, "we really do have soil! There really are worms here. It's so exciting." And it's like, these two grown people being so excited about worms! (laughter) It's like, yeah, that's like, really cool. And yeah, there are big centipedes too, up there, but they don't bother me. It's like, okay, you guys are part of it too. Yeah, I'm sure you're munching stuff up and excreting stuff out. And you know, it's like, it's just all part of it. So, the mongoose are the hardest thing. Feral cats are also a big problem. In terms of the birds and the geckos. Because they are such good hunters. And people tend to keep cats to keep the mice down. That's a conflict thing for me. It's hard. I just let 'em be. Bob's more aggressive. I just, you know, if he sees one, he'll go out and yell at it. That's the least of what he'll do, but he doesn't like cats. So, that's his thing.
●	Louise2	Relationship/ web\animals	75	75	Isn't that neat? Yeah. So, our... yeah, in Hawaii, there were - there was only one mammal before man came - it was a bat! And that was the only... there were the dolphins in the sea, but on the land just the bat. There were no undulates. There were... So it was just the birds, and the bat, and a couple of butterflies. And so man has brought many many animals here. I'm one of those people that can kind of... I don't hear the dogs bark at night, I don't... the Coqui frogs, at first they really bothered me, and I've gotten to the point where they can just blend into. It took some getting used to last night because I hadn't heard them for a while and then it just becomes a normal occurrence. Love the bird song. Just love hearing that. Wondering what they're saying. Just kinda like, "I'm here." "I'm here." "This is my place." "I'm here." (laughter). "Are you here, too?" yeah. And, even the spiders don't bother me. I do carry sticks around when I make my surveys so that I am not walking into them, 'cause that's really not pleasant. Bob has a great spider catcher that he puts on the front of the tractor - When he has to do the work where he's passing through spider webs. Because those spiders can, they spin a web right across the coffee roads.
●	Louise2	Relationship/ web\animals	77	77	And we have Jackson Chameleons too. Pretty amazing. They're like dinosaurs. They look exactly like dinosaurs. The males have big horns, double horns on the front, they are an invasive.
●	Louise2	Relationship/ web\animals	81	81	they are just amazing. You know, their eyes rotate backwards so they can see you. And, you can be picking coffee in a coffee tree and they'll be in the tree and they just slowly (laughter) creep up the tree and it's just, it's hysterical. Its like, "if I'm slooow enough you're noootgoonnanooticemeee." And they just; and they're territorial so they tend to stay in the same tree. And I mean, what whimsical thing. They are just...

●	Louise2	Community/ Neighbors	85	85	Here in this farming community, this Saturday, we'll have our homeowner's association meeting. Where usually about 10 people showup from this whole big community. Mostly people are loners. People that you know, buy six (6) to 10 acres of land tend to be loners. And when we first moved here our friends in Kona said, "You know, you're not going to meet anybody nice down there. They're not even going to talk to you." And it's not like that at all. We're all kind of busy. And we're all kind of reclusive, that's true. But we actually have great neighbors. Earl and Gail will, when we need to, if we need something they're there for us. And the same way back. And we try to visit like, we'll have drinks together on a Friday night, like every other week, sometimes every third week. It depends on how intense the workload is. And they're just great. And they're very different from us, but they're just great. And we have good friends down below; same thing. Saturday is our night with them. And we just go down. And the protocol here is you always bring your own drinks. So, we just take, I take my lemon water and Bob takes a bottle of wine and we just sit and talk. That's what we do. We don't play cards, we don't play games. We sit and talk. And we're all old, so.
●	Louise2	Community/ Neighbors	87	87	We have a nice, small circle of friends here. We have Christmas dinner together. We have Thanksgiving dinner together. We... it's lovely. We're just really blessed with that. And then beyond that is the community down in Miloli'i. We have a book club that I belong to. And that... remember what I showed you where we rented the house? It was like 10 miles away. So, one of the ladies lives there - who is in the book club. Everybody came here from someplace else. Except Mel, over here, he's a good neighbor, too. 'Cause he grew up here. But there are people from Scotland, from California, from Alaska, from Minnesota, from Michigan, from, just all over the place. A lot of California people. And in the book club, we get together once a month. And that's my only like, kind of like, "woman group," uh, collection.
●	Louise2	Community/ Neighbors	88	88	my social group used to be the Kona Coffee Farmer's Association. I volunteered every year at their events even when I was just staying a short time at the farm. Only I got worn out on the board. For two (2) years I was the Membership Chair and I just said, "I can't handle this anymore. I am spending way too much time on my computer doing this membership thing." And I just, I decided to take a break from that because I wanted to paint. And I couldn't do it all. So, it was interesting getting involved in a non-profit that was really business oriented
●	Louise2	Community/ Neighbors	88	88	so, now I'm more involved with non-profits that are volunteer oriented. Real non-profits, like the park, and the organizations that are dedicated to re-foresting the native forests. And so, those are the groups that we hang out with now.
●	Louise2	Community/ Neighbors	90	90	And it's a really nice group of people. I mean, we're all retirees. We're all from someplace else. But, we're all just the kind of people that just want to dig in the dirt, so it works out really well.

And we get to see places – special places – that we wouldn’t get to see otherwise. So that’s a real benefit to us.

●	Louise2	Community/ Neighbors	90	91	<p>And the village down there – two (2) sections of it. One (1), where the ladies in the book club live – the Anglo section; and there’s the native Hawaiian historic village. That village is actually – the naming song for the village of Milolii was recorded by Iz - and it’s “La ’Ilima”. We have an’ilima plantgrowing out behind the house, but it’s the naming song for that village and is about how a tsunami came in but nobody was hurt.</p> <p>And people said to us, the people in the new development, they tend to diss the people in the village; some of them do. It’s like, it’s that classic thing – “these are the new guys, we can do it better than they can, they have drug problems... we don’t have any of those problems.” [under her breath] oh, yeah right... So you hear that cross-talk, for instance “you don’t want to hang out in that village,” and “you don’t want to leave your car there,” and “you oughta be careful down there.” And we went down there, and we found that if we recognized people, if we didn’t pretend that those people weren’t there, they were welcoming to us. And so we have a friend, I don’t even know his name, but he’s along the walk to the beach that we go to. And we always, I always make sure that we say, “hi” to him, if he’s out. And it’s lovely to be recognized as a person. That’s all anybody needs – is to be recognized as a person. “I see you.” And, we don’t have any problems down there, and we just, we... you take, you know, I don’t, I’m sure that they don’t even know that we’re the ones who bring extra produce down there. It’s not about that. It’s about saying, “I see you.” And they have a lending library down there, which is, actually, most of it’s in Hawaiian. And it’s a biology library. It’s about the ocean, and about the land. For a while they had an internet charter school down there. But it didn’t last too long, but we would always go and talk to those folks, and if somebodies down there at the pavilion, or therecampers there, and we bring food down, we’d go over and say, “we brought avocados down, go ahead and help yourself.” You know, so it’s just to me, it’s so important to recognize people. That’s a... I see a thread there, recognize the plant – recognize the people...</p>
●	Louise2	Relationship/ web	91	93	<p>I see a thread there, recognize the plant – recognize the people...</p> <p>KR: You’re doing my research for me, Louise!</p> <p>L: It’s all part of creation, you know. And that’s a very important thing.</p>

●	Louise2	Community/ Neighbors	93	95	<p>So, we really like that community. We like going down there and stepping out of our comfort zone and saying, “hi!” to people and talking to them. And that’s been a real blessing. It’s really cool. I remember one time I went down to meet a group of our neighbors down at the beach, and I had made muffins. They were pretty bad, but - it was when I first started making muffins - and there was a Hawaiian family down there, they had the kids – the boys were fishing. And I went over and I offered them some muffins. Because muffin is my outreach... (laughter)</p> <p>KR: your peace pipe...</p> <p>L: ... yeah, ha!... and they said, “oh, we’ve been eating a lot, but thank you.” And the mother said, “My sons are here visiting, they’re on leave from the military, and they came home ‘cause my father’s dying... and so, the whole family has been together with him.” So, here’s this perfect stranger, and by the end of this conversation, we’re kissing each other and hugging each other, and I’m saying, “I hope his passage really goes well for you and I’ll keep you in my prayers.” And it’s like, you can meet a stranger on the beach, and let them know that they’re part [of] you. And it’s totally reciprocal. You know, it was like there was give and take, and a really lovely exchange, just by walking over.</p>
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●	Louise2	Community/ Neighbors	96	96	<p>We had the same kind of thing... there was a family down at the beach, and they had driven in. We always walk in. So they had the keys to those five gates. And they had rented a house down there. And they had little kids. And I was down on the beach when they arrived and a monk seal had come up on the beach and was resting on the beach. Monk seals are an endangered species – everyone of them is tagged – they only live in the Hawaiian Islands, and they are very special. Actually, it was from here to there from me. I was standing on the beach and this monk seal comes out of the ocean, just like walking by me! I'm like, "Whoa!" And they're big, they're really big. So, we had taken pictures of it, and you're not supposed to approach them because they can become aggressive. So, we were trying to find a tag and couldn't see the tag, but we took photographs. So this family came in, and I went up to one of the mothers. They were unloading all of their stuff and I said, "Um, I just wanted to let you know there's a Monk seal down on the beach." And she looked at me and she said, "So, you think my kids would abuse the monk seal?" And I said, "no, I just thought you'd like to know and that you might tell them that he's there and that, just... be respectful." So, she obviously had this chip on her shoulder that this Anglo approaching her was judgemental. And it wasn't, that was not my intent at all. So they, so we said goodbye, and they went on and then the kids came down to the beach. And there was a little girl with glasses on. And I know what that's like – to be at the beach. And she stood there, and she went, "Oh! I still have my glasses." And she was going like this... and I have to wear glasses all the time or I can't see. So, she was going to put them down on the beach – which is mostly rock – and I said to her, I went up to her and I said, "would you like me to take those back to the house for you?" And she said, "Oh, Auntie! That is so sweet of you!" And she gave me a big hug and so I took her glasses and I walked back up to the house and I said, "I'm looking for the father of a..." this guy was walking by and I said, "I'm looking for the parents of a little girl who wears glasses." And he said, "Oh that would be me." And I said, "Here are her glasses, she had gotten down to the beach and then I told her I'd bring them back up to the house." And he said, "Oh, thank you for that! That was really nice of you." And so, the day was redeemed, just by trying to keep that flow going between us. So, those are my most memorable interactions. So, yeah... Church not so good, but the beach is great! (said laughing).</p>
●	Louise2	Community/ Neighbors	97	97	<p>And, so it's been – we have what we need here – in terms of community. We really do. And we've gone to fundraisers for native Hawaiian groups too. And we've found them to be incredibly hospitable, and incredibly welcoming. And it's been very nice. Very nice. And if you ever want to go to a Luau, make sure it's a native Hawaiian fundraiser, 'cause the food is fantastic! It's totally different from what you would get at a hotel Luau. Oh my gosh!</p>

●	Louise2	Community/ Neighbors	115	115	I always make sure that I go out and speak to the women. And I've known these women now for 12 years. So, I've seen their children be born. And the little ones walk around the farm in their diapers. And they... it's lovely... 'cause when the school is out then their three children come with them. I hear the kids move just all through the farm – and they have a reading blanket on the ground and they'll have crayons, and papers, and books, and their toys... and then they just go off and play in the woods like kids would... It's just like a woods to them. And they move around. And they'll sometimes get up here by the house. And they're very... the kids are very respectful. I would like to... you know, I told them, "you know, if it rains you can come to the house; you can... you know, it's fine. You don't have to stay away." But they're more comfortable being by themselves. And yeah, they're really cute.
●	Louise2	Community/ Neighbors	117	117	So, it's really... I like seeing the families together. And Ramon says, "this is the way life should be. You're in the field with your family and you're all together." And "You're outside talking to your friends." ... I mean, they talk while they pick. It's a big conversation thing. And I've never been in any other farm field, where there are farm workers. So, you know, I said, "Should I..." I said at the Farmer's Association, "Should I bring in portable toilets?" And they said, "Oh, don't do that! They won't use 'em." And, I don't know. You know. I mean... and the other thing is, I don't know when they're coming. So, if you don't know when they're comin', you don't know when to order the portables. Yeah, yeah. It's... yeah... but, my house is open to them if they want it, and so, yeah.
●	Louise2	Community/ Neighbors	133	133	In terms of the farm – when we first bought the farm – because we wanted it to be a pastoral retreat, we left the keys with the president of the congregation, to the house. And we said, "you know, if you need a place for somebody – if there is a need – here are the keys!" "You have the keys to this house down there." So that's how the volunteer groups got here. And so we made it available to them. And with that first pastor, that kinda worked really well. It really did.



●	Louise2	Community/ Neighbors	134	135	<p>And the flowers that I have in the yard,— the Red Ti, and the — I have these plants that'll probably bloom tomorrow morning, they have, they look like white orchids, and I have little yellow flowers down there — all of those were gifts from a lady — in the church — who said, "Come to my house, after this ministry, and I'll feed you lunch, and I'll give you some flowers." And so I went down to her house and she told me her life story. And how she had started out as a coffee bride. She's Japanese. She grew up on Oahu. And she married into a family that was a coffee family on the big island. And she came here and they were workin' their butts off in the coffee field. And she was like, "I don't know about this." And there was a woman in the community who hung herself from the processing roof. And it was because she was just done in by the physical labor of the coffee farm. And Kathy said, "I looked at her, and I said, 'That could be me.' I have to find a way out of this." And so she got a job at one of the local banks. Shegot out of the coffee field 'cause it was so much work.</p> <p>But her husband has remained a farmer all this time. And so it was really interesting talking to her about all that.</p>
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●	Louise2	Community/ Neighbors	157	161	<p>so Marshall Islanders are granted perpetual right to live and work in the United States. They can emigrate here. And some of them had to leave their island. Since it's a group of islands not everybody lives on the polluted ones. But the fact that their society is very very different from ours. It's very striated. It's a caste system. You have chiefs who tell the people what they're going to do and who really guide these small communities. So, the Marshall Islanders – they're in Arkansas, they're in Wisconsin, but they here in Hawaii too. And this is closest to their natural lands. So they come and they stay as their own, insular, community. And they try to get jobs to support families. It's very difficult. Actually the Marshall Islands now are in really good shape, but these outlying communities are just really seen as outsiders, and people spread rumors about them like, "Oh they don't know how to use the bathroom," and "they don't wear underwear," and "they smear feces on the inside of restrooms." And, I don't know if any of that is true, because I've heard people say a lot of things here that are not true. So, it is really identifying that group as sub-human, and that is so wrong. And it hurts me. It hurts me as a member of the Anglo community to hear people talk about that.</p> <p>At the Episcopal church that we attended, the Marshall Islanders used our parish hall as their worship space in the afternoon. So what people would say was, "Oh, well, it's not our Marshall Island group, it's the others that are bad." So, it is very much like the racism on the mainland. With any minority group, and that is just so hard to see. And people – my own farm manager – he won't hire a Marshall Islander to be part of his picking group. Because they're... they have a different work ethic. They kind of hang out. And it was the Marshall Islanders' pickers that turned in the big farms for not paying them minimum wage. Well, they had a perfect right to do that. Because they were being exploited. So, that kind of tension – it's the normal American thing – it's the minority groups and each minority group tries not to be the one on the very bottom. It's so classic. But, in this small space, it's just very visible. And that... it's the same with the Filipino's – we don't have as many of them now, since the terrorist attacks. It's more difficult for a Filipino to come here – because they're a Muslim country, basically. And so, you know, dealing with the tension of that stuff is sad.</p> <p>That turtle over there is a Marshall Island weaving – because two years ago – the year before - the Pastor's wife had organized a Christmas Eve party for the Marshall Island congregation at our church. And they came and sang at the – and they're, they're amazing musicians! – And they came and sang at the Christmas Eve Service and we put on this Christmas party for them. And there were stacks of presents for all the children. And the next year, she was going on - her husband was going on - sabbatical and so they were not going to be there for the planning period. And I said, "Pam, how can I help you? How can I help you to get this Christmas Party together? What can I do while you're away? And the next thing I knew, in the bulletin it said, "and Louise is in charge of the Marshall Island Christmas Party."</p>
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KR: Oh, great.

L: So, I said, "Okay, I opened my mouth; I'll do it." And it was wonderful. It was fabulous. But I made sure that when they came back, I was kind of invisible and Pam helped the Marshall Island pastor give the presents out. I said, "I don't... my thing is that I do it in the background. I don't want to be the person up front." And it was probably the best Christmas Eve I've ever had and the kids were so appreciative. And so were the women. We had lots of second-hand gifts for the women of household goods, and clothing and stuff. They took it all. It was really great for them. But it's a very different society. And I think that there's room for all of us in this canoe. And so that kind of tension is... so in other words, I've had good interactions but then I've also heard gossip behind it and it's just really hurtful.

●	Louise2	Community/ Neighbors	163	163	I need to have the courage to speak to it. And just like with the prison ministry, to be able to say, "Maybe we could do this a little differently so that it feels different. And unfortunately, I've felt that both faith communities were really into judging people. That that was their major form of entertainment. And that's why we're not still there. Because, so... when you say, "advocacy," I don't really, that term doesn't. I don't even know what to do with that term. Okay, either by definition or by... I just, I don't know what to do with it. But I feel that myself, personally, I need to be able to stand up for truth. And just say, it's like Bernie says, "we are all in this together." (laughter) That we need to realize we need to take care of each other, instead of being so critical of other groups. But sometimes... and then I say that, and then I say... well, I don't go to that church anymore 'cause they were critical. And does that make me critical? But maybe that makes me just stand up for my own truth. That I don't want to be near that poisoned atmosphere. So I try to, as I say, the planting and weeding volunteer groups that we belong to - they are more faith-filled than the congregations are. And it's not how much we can judge each other. It's just - let's all try to accomplish this together. And so I need to personally put myself in spaces where that is happening. But also, when I'm in the other space, how do you s... I, I don't know. I don't want to be judgemental of them, but I want to stand up for the truth. That's very important to me.
●	Louise2	Community/ Neighbors	165	166	<p>it is the hardcore islanders verses the new people. So that is part of the transient thing. It's like we come in as a new person and they're like, "Oh, no no no, you will learn in time how it is here on this island."</p> <p>And so, yeah, it's kind of like, it's hard for newbies to come in and, but they... you know. I think the Lutheran church is gonna be fine. They love Bob. He built them a beautiful Pascal candle stand at the request of one of the pastors. And they think he's terrific. And that's really nice. And as I said the prison ministry was successful for me. So, um, I guess just being myself is probably the advocacy that I need rather than running away. And sometimes you just have to run away for your own preservation.</p>
●	Louise2	Community/ Neighbors	181	181	The high school is up above the Episcopal church and they have trouble with vandalism by the high school students. The pastor's truck was stolen two days after Christmas out of the parking lot. Well... he left his keys in the ignition. He came from Alaska - that's what you always did - if somebody needed your vehicle more than you did you assumed that they really needed it. Well, you can't do that in... at this urban area...where... with a brand new red Toyota pickup. Never to be seen again. You know, so there's that tension of the church buildings being inside of this community. And we all thought that's how it was supposed to be, right? The church was supposed to be the gathering point for the community.

●	Louise2	Community/ Neighbors	186	186	And talk about just farming. Weird things happen. Like, the USDA produces their farmer, their farm worker rights posters – in English – initially. And so, then they said, “We’re going to add Filipino, and Tong language posters.” And we’re like, “All of our workers are Hispanic! What are you talking about? Where are you coming from?” Well, they’re coming from Oahu. So, the island hop problem is a big problem in terms of suiting it to the place. ‘Cause each island is actually different. But, all of the decisions are pretty much made on Oahu. And we’re like, “Oh, great!... Tong... where are they?” And so, yeah, it’s been pretty interesting
●	Amber2	Community/ Neighbors	4	4	Just it was a grand narrative and my grandpa loved farming and he had a stroke that same year my dad died, but he was able to come out and see him at work. My uncle would come out who had the spinal meningitis and he would work. Our neighbors would come, our nephew would come and it was very, um, so much more so much more than a job. I mean it was very, very whole. From that end, I don’t even remember what the question was but I hopefully that answers it.
●	Amber2	Relationship/ web	8	8	The farm, but my brother was going to have open heart surgery and you know I was taking my vacation to come and sit with him after that. So just heavy, heavy, things you know, and it all revolved around this farm. So it’s hard for me to separate it; it’s never been, it’s never been just the farm, it’s been big. It’s been my faith, it’s been family, it’s been all that you learn through, through that. So I felt God was asking me to come back home and um, then, I thought it was gonna be more ministry. Thought I would do some business work on the side you know just to pay the bills and um, I remember my brother being so excited for me to be home just so mom would have more help and we, you know, so it was really good.
●	Amber2	Relationship/ web\animals	14	14	So the more you read God’s word and you come into, I mean I told you my verse, “The righteous man cares for the needs of his animals, but the kindest act of the wicked is cruel.” [NOTE: Proverbs 12:10] Your faith is definitely lived out as a farmer.
●	Amber2	Relationship/ web\animals	14	14	I’m thinking like in Malachi when it says, “One day we’ll leap like calves released from the stall.” (laughter) I know that that looks like. So you know I think that, there’s other things too. It talks about being, as you’re waiting for Jesus to return you should be a wise and faithful servant just handing out God’s word. And I think about how ordinary that is, but that’s like what we do with the cows. It’s not new. It’s not exciting. We’re not looking to change their lives.
●	Amber2	Community/ Neighbors	26	26	Summer is just, you know, summer is just summer. Try to get out by the lake and you know the evenings when the sun is setting and you’re just, the cool of the day, it’s starting to cool down and you’re just with your family and you’re doing, crops together. A lot of community

●	Amber2	Relationship/ web\animals  Work	30	30	Like everybody's in line and everybody wants to drive the tractor. Not everyone wants to stay behind and milk the cows and I was okay staying behind and milking the cows. I have my part in it, it's just not as active that way. Um, yeah you know I love watching them from birth to death. I like being responsible for them the entire way. I like watching their personalities. I like watching them grow. I like knowing their families.
●	Amber2	Relationship/ web\animals	32	32	Who they are. I wish they never got sick. I wish they never died. But they do. And you come in. Um, yeah, I think just caring for them I think is my experience mostly and being patient and discipline like knowing when I need them to do something. There's a woman who said, "You ask them nicely once and you demand it the second time." And I think she's right or you just end up wasting a lot of energy. But you definitely have to train them. So, there's asking and then there's okay, "I get to be the boss." And that's okay. That's my God-given role and always has to be done with kindness. Maybe like parenting. There's a line where you need to be the one dictating the flow so that that is good experience.
●	Amber2	Relationship/ web\animals	38	38	o yeah I think that's my experience, yeah. I don't know if I naturally love cows. You know some people be like, "You know I'm such an animal lover!" It's like, "Well, in some ways I would rather deal with 50 cows than 50 people." (laughter) And both have their own skill set I guess.
●	Amber2	Relationship/ web	48	48	So things like that boggle me because you see what life looks like right now and you go, "How can that be?" And it kind of just pushes you into Jesus and into Christ. Now, I mean that's probably the first, the first wave of it and then you're just looking for people who are recognizing that. And slowing down and saying, "Okay, what matters? What are we doing? How are we, um, how are we living in relation to," um, I think that's been some of the biggest things. How to live in relation to God, other people and the land and I don't think I understood that until I started reading the agrarian a little more.
●	Amber2	Relationship/ web	48	50	And that really your faith is to be worked out...  K: On the land.  A: towards your relationship with the land. That's a not, that's not a creation-worshipping-pantheistic sort-of view, it just means the reality is you live within the created order that God put in place, yes, it's fallen, certainly, but God didn't take you out of the world. He said, "You'll, you'll have thorns and you'll fight and you'll return to the dust," and I think they just gave me permission to start really looking at it. Because the, the modern world isn't looking at it. And that's a little critical and we could parse that – you know what I mean? We could make that a little more generous I think in the statement, but in general, most of my friends are not considering you know creation, fall, and redemption in this setting right on the farm, like I am.

●	Amber2	Relationship/ web	50	50	I'm just trying to think back that's being kind of general. It just gave me that permission to start loving my roots, to start slowing down, to embracing (pause) this quiet kind of humble stance of not knowing everything and being okay with it but still joining in and being a steward where you are which is, you know, it's a weird balance because we are heading to glory and sometimes when Christchurch says, "Oh this world doesn't matter all." It doesn't matter what we do. But I don't think the Bible teaches that, you know. I think we're stewards and everything's reflected there. So, yah, it's just um, yeah like I said a big question and I'm still working through it, but it just gave me some detail and some color and some, a little more dimension to what this worldview um, of creation being creation which 6 days of creation and most of it was the nature around us and we were created at the end to join in to what God had prepared, perfectly prepared for us and still amazingly sustained us with even after the fall. Like, you need evidence of grace, science just makes me think more and more grace because of how finely tuned and how held together it is. Even though we are greedy by nature and doing everything we can to destroy each other and the land, God is still so gracious in holding us together.
●	Amber2	Relationship/ web	54	54	so I thought that was fascinating thinking about the people of Israel and working through the land and man, reading scripture all the time that was a whole different view of holiness being lived out very much as how they were stewards of the land. It was God's land, it was God's abundance, it was God's provision, but they, they had a role and a lot of the law was in-twined with that which was just a new way of thinking, thinking about it.
●	Amber2	Community/ Neighbors	54	54	Just essays with a bunch of different people. Different stories of how, how people are living more the homestead and you know hand to mouth and doing the work and the beauty of toil, not trying to avoid it necessarily – not trying to.. um, be meaningful in community and community based.
●	Amber2	Community/ Neighbors	70	70	They've come to us. I mean throughout childhood I had friends whose homes were a little more scattered. You know, maybe divorce, maybe remarriage, maybe just feeling misunderstood. And I could see it Tami's friends, in Brett's friends, in my friends like this was a place for them to come. Something about the consistency.
●	Amber2	Community/ Neighbors	70	70	But to watch her do it with other people was really beautiful. And she would do that from a young age on. So it was the farm, so it was that, yeah definitely you know we, we needed help and people generously came and helped us, especially right after dad died. And you know we were all still pretty young and working through, but uncles, neighbors, um, grandpa, cousin, just everybody just came and worked alongside.
●	Amber2	Community/ Neighbors	70	70	we've done farm tours for a long time, 4th grade farm tours, inviting them out.

●	Amber2	Community/ Neighbors	70	70	Otherwise like I said people sort of just come. If somebody has somebody from a different country or, or just out of town and just want to see a dairy farm, they'll come here and so it's, it's not so much an organized sort of thing, it's understanding that this place is not really yours. And like when I milk, you know, sometimes people just come and talk to you while you're milking and you're kind of their captive audience which is fine you know as long as they let me keep working as we're talking.
●	Amber2	Community/ Neighbors	70	70	Some of my friend, some of my friends husbands, they would come out with their small children during the week and you know this was just wonderful for the kids. They just love it and then once in a while their husbands would come out and you'd see a real *takes a deep long sigh* and they're looking around and just the land and the space so I think you know we have some, one of Gracie's friends now likes to come and milk and she wants to do cows and horses someday and why her specifically, I don't know, but you just leave the door open and encourage her.
●	Amber2	Community/ Neighbors	70	70	I take some of friends out on wild flower walks.
●	Amber2	Relationship/ web	70	70	But it's not so much organized, it's more just being open and understanding. Nobody really comes here by accident. You're not here by accident. You know how God arranges. There's a quote from a missionary it says, "love God. I have two loves in my life: A love for God and a love for the person God happens to have in front of me at the moment." And the farm feels very much like that. You don't have to go out looking. Eventually someone comes and you know they know where you are and, and they come out which is kind of cool. So less us going to them and more God sending them.
●	Amber2	Community/ Neighbors\ Partnership	82	82	So then biblically you can come underneath and say, "God what are your commands?" Because if I know there's commands and they're lined up then I know how you need power to do it. And you know he talks about masters and slaves and I know that's a loaded term, but I just look at it as masters and employees you know and he just asks you to work with all your heart for them and give them. So I think that coming under that structure she's my authority whether she's a woman or man, it didn't matter. She was the authority, but under God it's trying not to be something that I'm not as a farmer. That's been the most important thing as a woman, not to try to be a man. Because that kills your soul.
●	Amber2	Community/ Neighbors	84	84	But I've never really felt unequal or un, you know, never looked down. We've always had a lot of respect of the community and amazement that she did it. And um, that I would come alongside her and do it. You know so really it's been, that's been good. I think our farm size is pretty well liked.



●	Amber2	Community/ Neighbors\ Partnership	86	86	But I think we know who we are and we're watching Sam start to come in and take it and it starts to make you realize, we do know who we are. We are passing something on to him. He's going to have to in and come alongside. We wouldn't do him any good to just clear the way for him. He's gonna need to come and we need to have something to invite him into.
●	Amber2	Relationship/ web  Body	90	90	You know, every part of our own being, our mind, our soul, our body, our relationships within the family, within the workplace, within the church. How do we, how do we do? You know I was reading second Corinthians and it talks about the fragrance of Christ. I mean we are the fragrance of Christ, we are the salt of the earth, we are the light of the world. I mean you are impacting this world and everything that you do so when you talk about problems that way, I mean being separated from God is a problem. Um, worshipping other things that can't, that can..aren't worthy of your worship that you know, but a lot of those are now ideologies and ideas and I don't think people realize that. So how do you get to the heart of people's issues about their need for God? There's technology which is separating, separating us from God and from each other with the words of saying it's connecting us which is very confusing. You know, well you're not really connected then, well okay, um. So I, so what I see is just you know is kind of one layer after another. It's like okay we're worshipping this and our means, the way we're structuring life is isolating us more and more, um, but I don't know if I see it in one problem. I see it as isolation. I see it as loneliness. I see it as unrootedness. Restlessness. But I overall when I'm around people I see a longing for more so I'm not discouraged by it at all. But on a grand level, you know I hear the levelslabels of the boomers and the millenials, I hate, I hate those labels because when you're talking about a millennial or whatever I'm just gonna look at somebody I know whose living that and have a conversation with them.
●	Amber2	Relationship/ web	92	92	So I think, maybe it's just getting back to humanity and just looking at each other and having conversations and, and how do you do that, that's not gonna be a big program or you know, "we're going to be human now!" No. But just living authentically and I do see, I do see the look in the eyes of our younger generation and they're looking for something. They're longing for something. I think even with all the savvy and all that, I mean, they want to be invited into something. Um, to be you know just like all of us to be loved, and valued and included and I think we kind of have them off on an island right now. We're kind of afras of them and I think it's just, um, looking at life more like a family – you know your older, your younger. How do we start making some of those connections. Get everybody out of their little isolated worlds which brings me back to my first point is I think that's the role of the church.

●	Amber2	Relationship/ web	106	106	You know how big can you, how big can you be and still have humanity and still be looking people in the eye and, and um, those sorts of things. So the questions aren't that different. It's just that you're not forced to submit to them in the church where here I was forced to come in and wrestle with it and struggle
●	Amber2	Relationship/ web	108	108	I mean that's a small dynamic. I can't talk to 30 people the way I talk to 3 people. I don't know how to you know and everybody's saying that can be bypassed now. But I think some people's souls says, "No, that can't be bypassed." Somebody needs to be looking you in the eye and it can't be necessarily through a computer screen. Maybe it can be, but... you know I guess for me technology can maintain a relationship, it can't start it, it can't root it, it can't you know there's things it can't do. Okay let's think. I think there's the parallels. I think that's what I'm pulling out of this, is understanding there's life beyond the farm, but what happens here is important.
●	Amber2	Relationship/ web	148	148	And once you're rooted in Christ and you know, it's not about selling anything to anybody. It's not about, it's about meeting them where they are and saying, there's hope, you know. But it's demanding and actually so demanding it demands all of you.
●	Amber2	Relationship/ web	166	166	You know, this is not, this is not you going to church, this is you live out this union and this prayer and you, you push through on the kind of that moment of standing before him saying, he's the master and he's putting the talonstalts, the money, that parable in your hands and saying, "Invest it." He's a God who wants you to invest it. He's not, don't be afraid of him that way. The test, you know in some ways test his generosity, so whatever he's given you. So when I was really looking at all of it, all of that and praying through it, just came back to faith, family, and the farm was a very strong. It was very clear and I understood that there was something very unique about this situation and I think as I'm always trying to relate to other people and understand and not just be like, "This is my experience!" But this really is my experience. And faith, family, and farm was given to me as part of the experience.
●	Amber2	Relationship/ web\animals	166	166	So as we enter into this question and what that means, so how does your faith, your fueling it through Jesus Christ, you're examining the relationship between mother/daughter, you're examining the relationship between sister/family, you're examining relationships on submission, on I judged how my, my holiness, I know it's given through Christ and it's finished, but I don't worry about how much I'm serving in church, it's more how am I speaking to my mother and how am I treating the animals.

●	Amber2	Relationship/ web	166	166	So as we enter into this question and what that means, so how does your faith, your fueling it through Jesus Christ, you're examining the relationship between mother/daughter, you're examining the relationship between sister/family, you're examining relationships on submission, on I judged how my, my holiness, I know it's given through Christ and it's finished, but I don't worry about how much I'm serving in church, it's more how am I speaking to my mother and how am I treating the animals.
●	Amber2	Relationship/ web	166	166	Faith, when you're where you are and you're not going with that program, I'm gonna go evangelize or preach, or it's more I'm listening. Maybe it's the wisdom aspect, the practical living. So um, I think that's, it's just there, they're all connected. It's not something, it can be separated and as I'm looking at asking God and choosing to be here and all of that, I'm realizing that, but also faith is so much more than this.
●	Judy2	Community/ Neighbors	3	3	They had Dennis Fritz back then and he just did a great, great job working with us. And then when they came out and worked, I mean they worked with us, ya know so that was a neat thing. So I guess ya know we work with an agronomist. We work with Jeff Polanski. He sees to all our needs. He does nutrient management plans. He does whatever for us. I mean we're just mindful of the land.
●	Judy2	Community/ Neighbors	43	43	nd even like Ambers friends you know they had little ones and they'd just love coming around here and even still they just still come now. They come in the summer time at least once or twice and help feed cows and throw soybeans into them and feed calves. We've had people from all over here. For a while it seemed like we had... There were some people from New Zealand that came out. They had friends here so they bought them just from different countries. We had friends that would bring their friends or family here, I mean it was unbelievable. We should've kept a log just to find out. Japan. We had China. We had some friends whose Brett's secretary, when he was a commercial appraiser, but she, they adopted two kids from China so then the family came here when Monica graduated from Lawrence. No, that was their friend's daughter, but they had like adopted her. They were a mentor family and then they brought them and we couldn't understand them but we could understand her, the girl who graduated, but the parents – that we had too. We had a lot of that going on. So it's been a joy to be able to share this with everybody ya know? I mean it's not just ours, it's for everyone so we try to keep it up nice so it looks nice. So we can have a good impression like try to keep it clean.
●	Judy2	Relationship/ web\animals	45	45	You know we don't really worry too much about anything. God kind of takes care of everything. We never get too excited about the animals. We did downsize after John died.
●	Judy2	Relationship/ web\animals	49	49	We have 56 stalls and we try to keep them full in the barn for milking. Then we probably have 50, anywhere from 45 to 50 young stalk. So we raise our calves, we raise them all, all the replacements, all are heifers.

●	Judy2	Relationship/ web\animals	52	55	<p>K: And so what's your relationship like with your cows and then, I know we've done some birdwatching even in the last 2 days. So what's that and we've talked about foxes...</p> <p>J: (smiles about the birds) Yeah we have all those things here. Deer in the woods. You'll walk out there you'll see what the woods looks like after a while. What's my relationship to that is what you're saying?</p> <p>K: Yeah to all the animals</p> <p>J: I don't know were just –they're all part of our family. You know really when you think about it, they're our bread and butter. There our living for milk and meat. And some it's hard to ship cowscause we get attached to them.</p>
●	Judy2	Relationship/ web\animals	55	57	<p>But Gracie had Popcorn, that was her little calf. Um it's on the refrigerator right there in the middle. You see Gracie.</p> <p>K: Oh yeah.</p> <p>J: That was Popcorn. Popcorn came in and she had this big ugly quarter. I have no idea why. I've never had anything like that but it was Gracie's pet. And she was really sad when that cow had to go because we couldn't keep her because the utter was just ugly.</p>
●	Judy2	Relationship/ web\animals	59	60	<p>So you know you become attached to them. Amber and I always say that, and she always says too because of the fall we have to get rid of them but you know you realize that we wished everything could just stay forever. But we're getting to a point where we realize it's just meat now and don't keep them as long as we used to. We used to keep them until they were just about ready to drop, and nowya know for safety reasons and whatever sending your meat out is a lot better. They're actually stricter now too with these rules. They have to look decent when they go to market. But we try to take as good of care of them as we can. I mean they're fed, they're clean, we work around them all the time so they're tame. They're pretty tame. I mean you can see yesterday when we're working around them. Isn't anything wild around here.</p> <p>We don't really have a vet very much because they go out in the pasture. I mean they're not stuck in a barn so we don't have a lot of health issues with them. We don't vaccinate anymore. We don't do any of this stuff anymore. It's just kind of let them be who they are.</p>

●	Judy2	Relationship/ web\animals	62	62	Um, I think it's just that it was a pain catching these animals to try to do this. (laughter) They weren't happy and we weren't happy so we just said "eh". We don't sell. We're a closed herd which makes a difference. If we were buying and selling then that would be completely different, but we're just a closed herd.
●	Judy2	Relationship/ web\animals	66	66	All here. We don't sell. We don't sell anything so then we don't have to. And dipping, we used to dip and then we found out that the teets got chapped and then they'd kick at you when you washed them for the next time. And it's like, "why are we doing this?" We stopped and our somatic cell count is probably better than it was back then. So I don't know. So it's just things that you just do or don't do that you know you find our they're fine, they're fine that way. And our fieldman Al Philabeck said actually a lot of farmers are going that route. You know if it's a closed herd like that they are getting away from the vaccinations and that type of thing so. And it's neither right or wrong. If they want to do it that's fine. But we just said "eh, it's not worth it." Make it simple.
●	Judy2	Relationship/ web\animals	67	74	<p>Yeah, and you have all your barn cats</p> <p>J: (laughs) Yeah, they're all spayed and neutered. So they're pretty healthy. There's like 12 or 13 of them around here.</p> <p>K: And it seems like you like the little cat we fed yesterday.</p> <p>J: Yeah</p> <p>K: You like taking care of them</p> <p>J: Yeah. And it they're sick we make sure, we try to get them better and you know don't just let them die. We take good care of them just like your children.</p> <p>K: Yeah (laughs)</p> <p>J: Tami's really good at that. Like if there's somebody, like the tube feeding or something like that, she's right on that. She's right over here taking care of that. She's mothering them. She just has a patience for that. She's really funny with that.</p>

●	Judy2	Community/ Neighbors\ Partnership	74	74	So she helps whenever she can to, but she's awful busy in school so she can't help a lot. But you know like when Amber was at retreat a couple weekends ago where she led worship at retreat, she's gone from like Friday, Saturday, and Sunday then Amb, Tami's here milking. So you know everybody, everybody works together here. We're all just part of the family farm.
●	Judy2	Community/ Neighbors	76	76	I think we are an important part of this little local community really. I mean as far as people coming out here and things, we're sharing what we have here.
●	Judy2	Community/ Neighbors	82	82	Well we have really good relationships with our neighbors. I mean that's, we're just like all like family you know. And like the neighbors up the road here with the robotic milkers now, Sam, if Sam has some friends here that have not seen them, he'll just give them a call and he can go up anytime and show them. So I mean you know we have a really good relationship there. Um, I help deliver meals for Freedom for the senior citizens, do that. I teach Adventures in Dairyland. Help at church all the time with that type of thing, but so that's all part of community I guess you know. A lot of it is just people coming to the farm and being able to just share our farm with them. Share our farm experiences and let the kids touch and feel the animals and whatever.
●	Judy2	Relationship/ web\animals	84	84	I guess we just show them, there's a tour of the farm you know. We just we share what we have here you know, what God has given us. From the little calves and they probably like the little calves the best of anything, the kids you know. And then they like feeding, they like feeding the cows. That they like too, so we let them, so the cows really get a lot of treats. They get a lot more soybeans when somebody's here because (laughter) they get extra portion, but you just let them. And then when I used to mix feed, I used to have all those little ones helping with mixing feed too like pushing the soybeans in by hand. They had little shovels and they would push it in and I miss that 'cause I used to have Sam and Gracie do it all the time. And then some of Amber's friends came and helped and then they would always help do it. Um, and then you miss that because they're all growing up now, they don't do that anymore. So no one helps anymore. So it's just fun being able to share all those little things with those little ones and they look so forward to that, to coming

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●		Judy2	Relationship/ web	86	86	This is warm. I mean this is the family farm. This is just a warm, loving environment you know.
●		Judy2	Relationship/ web	88	88	Yeah, that God so in charge of it. Yeah.
●	Neighbor who retired years ago - holds Judy in high esteem	Judy2	Community/ Neighbors	91	91	Mike said yesterday, you just keep going.
●		Judy2	Relationship/ web\animals	98	98	That's pretty much we don't have much to say about anything. Whatever is here. Even cows sometimes will have cows that something happens to. You know like maybe they'll get mastitis or maybe they'll get sick or something. So then we'll have some heifers that are waiting to come in the barn to freshen. And it's like we say, "Well God's just moving that one out to make room for another one." You know so pretty much of what happens around here we just figure it's all under His control you know yeah.

●	Judy2	Community/ Neighbors	114	114	You're always welcome. (laughter) Everybody's welcome and they are. They are here. Like we have a little girl that last year she was here all the time. Her parents both work and they leave the kids alone all the time and she was just here all the time just cause. And Tami's when she's by the horses, she just wants community. She just wants a family. You know she doesn't have that. So like sometimes it gets a little annoying (laughs) and she's looking for a place to milk cows so hopefully she finds one. Hopefully because we don't have enough. We don't have enough. One of our pastors, actually Pastor Dan that was leading worship this morning, his daughter is coming home for summer and she wants to come and help. You know you have to find the space for her to help with something too.
●	Judy2	Community/ Neighbors	116	116	So yeah, and we've had interns through the years you know helping like from Fox Valley Tech. We've had some and they were here for like maybe 3 weeks or something. They came and helped with morning chores or night chores and that type of thing. So we just, oh and then had Erica. She was from Finland. She was here interning two years ago. Um, she was in an agricultural program in Finland.
●	Judy2	Community/ Neighbors	122	122	ou always have people say to you, "if you need some help, just give us a call" you know, but we don't so we don't do it. But I mean people are willing to come. I mean there have been a lot of people through the years that have said, even this Jeff now, that grabbed our bill today, [referring to man from breakfast after church – different than agronomist] he's said that through the years too, "If you ever need some help you know, just give me call." This Tom O'Brien, he was retired and then he said, "Oh I grew up on a farm. I would just love to help you on the farm." Well, we don't need the help, that's the thing, but people would be willing to from the church if we called but we don't. We don't need the help. And we're not gonna stop working.
●	Judy2	Relationship/ web	152	152	You know the next generation can take over, we're done. (laughs again) I mean I'm not done yet, but you know, but if I am called, I'm done. Yeah it's fun. It's good. And you see what kind of influence you've had on grandkids and stuff and just think that's all part of the, part of the joy of seeing them grow up too now. I enjoy this so much and our little Sam, driving the tractor with me and all of a sudden and you watch him grow up alongside you and there he is taking over.
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●	Judy2	Community/ Neighbors\ Partnership	158	158	<p>Yeah, but that's things that you let them kind of work with you because they are part of the farm so if that's what their interest is, you kind of let them go with it. Like Sam and his tractor. He found a blower and we needed a new blower that's been two years ago. He found it on this Craig's List. Some guy, they had just bought a new blower about 5 years ago and one of the partners died quite young. So they were selling it so it was half price and it's almost a new blower. So I mean he found that, so it's like yeah that's fine, we've got the money for it, go get it. (laughs) You know, so those are the thing you know that you just kind of keep working them in. You just let them make their little decision and do what they want to do and you know shut them off. Maybe some things you have to shut off.</p>
●	Judy2	Community/ Neighbors	165	168	<p>That's great and it's so family infused. I mean everybody's here. Everybody wants to be here. Which I think speaks to the tone that you have set here as well.</p> <p>J: And friends, friends want to be here, yeah.</p> <p>K: They're here today.</p> <p>J: Sometimes there's a lot of them here. Sometimes Brett has, Sam has a friend Brett, that comes. He comes quite a bit but he works at Home Depot now too, so I think he. He works actually for the big Schufeld dairy. He drives like truck and stuff and I think he's gonna be working there full time because he's gonna be graduating in May from FVL. So he's going to be working there and Sam once in a while goes and helps there then too. And now with Sam driving, he will be able to drive some of those big trucks in between, so he'll get some of that, a taste of that big dairy stuff too. Which last year he did. He drove along, or rode along with Brett for some of the things that they did too.</p>
●	Jeannette2	Relationship/ web	83	83	<p>Exactly. For us, Um, I think we're at the beginning stages of that. It's kind of like we're acquaintances with the soil instead of farming that deep, like that Wendell Berry relationship you read about all the time. Um, so mainly it's just like trying to plug in little things here and there in to our very intensive system to treat the soil better than otherwise. We're not really able to do no-till or, or a lot of cover cropping or letting it lay fallow because it's always moving and we're always transitioning from one space to another. So I think for us I think it means, like, trying to till a row less than necess... than would be optimal for new growth or um, even like, maintaining, letting a row of lettuce we haven't used go to flower so it puts out pollinator... so just like trying to put little allowances for native pollinators, for soil health, for things like that, into our very structured system.</p>

●	Jeannette2	Relationship/ web\animals	91	91	we are a spiritual bunch so we really like the birds and the bees and seeing the herons and there are tons of hawks that are constantly hunting in the fields so we love seeing them but as far as farmers go, it's not good (laughs). So you know, Guadalupe has his slingshot and he'll slingshot at them. And we try to put, ya know, little shiny ribbons to get rid of them.
●	Jeannette2	Relationship/ web\animals	93	93	The birds, yeah, it's a trade off because we gain so much joy from getting to see that like what farming used to look I guess in our move here to Camarillo, but it's a small price to pay to slingshot them every one in a while (laughter). Um, and as far as incorporating integrated pest management on to our farm as much as possible so we don't have to use organic pesticides unless it reaches a certain peak level. So, trying to plant a row of herbs every 10 rows so that the strong smell dissuades pests from coming to the plants. Things like that. Keeping the soil healthy but we still have to use organic pesticides, ya know, that's just part of the game.
●	Jeannette2	Community/ Neighbors	97	97	our spiritual life as a community through the Abundant Table Church, farm church, is so connected with this farm. And on a deeper level to because we have been on different pieces of land, so it's not like we are tied to land. We're tied to a community and that community roots into a piece of land, whatever piece of land that is. And it's not ideal, it's interesting to see how we're able to ... be.. be a community... be a farm community that doesn't really have a farm.
●	Jeannette2	Community/ Neighbors	99	99	On a wider lens I think it's a commitment to a sustainable food system but not just ecologically but also socially, I think that is important to a lot of people who are in our community. But on a smaller lens, I think it's... we cook a lot and that is a deeply, um, it's a theological, it's, it's deep to cook for each other and eat together.... But yea, probably, mainly that we're all committed to trying to find ways to transform our food system.
●	Jeannette2	Community/ Neighbors	100	101	J: Really awesome. Super fun. There's boundless support from the local community as far as this farm.
●	Jeannette2	Community/ Neighbors	103	103	the schools have been so so so great. Like when we first started here we just assumed things would happen like they did on the last farm and that absolutely didn't happen. So there was a good 4-6 months where we couldn't fulfill our orders and the schools have been really gracious of walking that path of learning how to work with a small, local, organic farm.
●	Jeannette2	Relationship/ web	103	103	the schools have been so so so great. Like when we first started here we just assumed things would happen like they did on the last farm and that absolutely didn't happen. So there was a good 4-6 months where we couldn't fulfill our orders and the schools have been really gracious of walking that path of learning how to work with a small, local, organic farm.

●	Jeannette2	Community/ Neighbors	105	105	There's also like people always wanting to come out and touch and get their hands on some actual food and ya know and see how that transforms their thinking about the whole process too.
●	Jeannette2	Community/ Neighbors	107	107	I think it's hard for me to answer that question because I do feel like I am a newcomer to agriculture in general so a lot of the difficulties of just trying to break into a new community all alongside being woman. I think in general the experience that I've had is when people find out the Abundant Table, specifically find out about Reyna as woman, Latina, farm manager, they are, they explode because they are so excited that something like that exists because it's so rare.
●	Jeannette2	Relationship/ web	119	119	But it was really difficult for me to see God in Los Angeles and Evergreen with its beautiful landscape was kind of the first place that I was like, Of course! Yes, here She is like right here staring at you through the trees and on the tangle of green on the side of the road. She's everywhere, He's everywhere and um, so I think this work here is important in my own spirituality because it's all about slowing down and ...and learning about the infinite other lives and ecosystems that exist underneath the soil and in the air and around us and um, seeing like that interconnected web of life that exists on this farm and if you tug on one little part of it, over there something will fall over and we are never going to be able to see all these little strings that tie everything together. But they are stories for us to try to unravel to find out more about God and the world that we live in... Yeah.
●	Jeannette2	Relationship/ web animals	121	121	This might be a little off topic but um, my favorite thing about working on the farm was I was a vegetarian when I first started working here and by working on the farm I realized that that is a way more complicated question than just not eating meat. Because one of my first weeks working on the farm, the task was to go and kill all of the cucumber beetles that were on the cucumbers so you had to walk around and pop cucumber beetles and I was thinking, "I thought we were growing vegetables here and I thought we didn't have to kill anybody or anything?" (laughter) ya know. The more you kind of unravel what it means to grow food...where we as humans sit in that spool of thread, the more you realize, I realize I couldn't be a vegetarian, you could, but not for the reasons I was doing it because growing food means killing lots of bugs, lots of worms, lots of little bunnies that live in the forest, lots of birds, lots of squirrels. Ya know, thinning is killing a whole bunch of baby plants, so that has been my favorite aha moment of oh my gosh! It's so much more complicated than, um, ya know, if you want to advocate for animals, you can't just pat yourself on the back, it's not simple to pat yourself on the back for not eating meat. It's more about you have to unpack what is going on in the meat culture and and buy meat that is sustainably raised if that is your angle into it.

●	Jeannette2	Community/ Neighbors	141	141	more of a presence in places ...that are less white, so um going to farmer's markets or approaching the CSA boxes in places that are more um, ... ya know not in that direction, not in that direction, towards that crowd I was talking about earlier and possibly what we're trying right now is to or bring a more diverse group err produce variety in our CSA boxes right now to appeal to different demographics. So, We're putting more corn, potatoes, herbs call pazoote epazote and lamb's quarter and perslane purslane which is heavily used in Mexican cooking. Trying to get those into our boxes so that when we bring it they're not like, "What? I don't want chard." Stuff that we grew because I looked through a seed catalogue and I was like, I wanna eat that. (laughter) Ya know, how do make it more.. and we grow a lot of bok choy, pok choypak choi and tatsoi (?) .. just trying to diversify what goes into the boxes.
●	Jeannette2	Community/ Neighbors	157	157	So they've tried to, we've had a couple of relationships with churches and they just drop off because it's hard work. It's cooking a lot and it's using vegetables that you may not necessarily be familiar with. Things like that. Yeah. But I think it would be nice to see...like you were saying more visionary voices in this movement that were more reflective of gender and race and while I love Wendell Berry and Wes Jackson, especially Wendell Berry, the future would be nice to see Reyna or Zega Ortega
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●	Jeannette2	Relationship/ web	161	161	Probably something about the dangers of losing our relationship to our humanity by not getting down on our hands and knees and looking at soil and little weeds and food. And how it's a very easy way to keep grounded and helpful and not think you are in charge of anything is to work for a farm because everything is completely out of your control pretty much. Yeah, and the importance of, of... I mean, you go out in the fields and I'm sure you've experienced this at your house, but it's impossible to not get into a deep conversation and work through some stuff when you're in the fields because you're dealing with very fundamental concepts. Out in the field you're dealing with water, and you're dealing with earth, and you're dealing sun, and you're dealing with wind, and um, and a lot of everything else gets blown away when you're sitting there talking to someone and ya know putting your body to good use. (bird start chirping beautifully)

●	Reyna	Relationship/ web	7	7	To see how like similar we are to the plants, realizing how similar we are to the plants. So it's been really satisfying and amazing to see how even in deep composition and compost, you end up with this even more nutrient rich earth. And it's very similar to the people. Because ya know it's very similar to people in that after having a difficult life, not being victim, but having a difficult life, I am making the comparison that earth, sometimes you may even think you are living a shitty life, excuse the language, ya know through kind of like all that death, you can be reborn in a very fertile place.
●	Reyna	Relationship/ web	20	20	Yeah ya know, how wonderful the wonders of creation is. Really seeing plants as living things. That they really need, they have the same necessities as us. Water, sunlight. The plants really absorb the energy of the people around them.
●	Reyna	Relationship/ web	22	22	Well in an experiment (laughs), in my first weeks at the Santa Paula farm with Angel always telling her "you gotta weed, you gotta weed, you gotta weed," so I was a little frustrated about it, maybe cursing the weeds. And I felt like those plants that ya know weren't growing, kinda ugly. So because I was present, but not like really fully present in that job and slowly I stopped being so frustrated, started taking with the weeding and starting to appreciate the little... - it seems like it sounds crazy and I'm not even smoking a joint, but I really see the difference. (laughter) So ya know it changed because I was just more happier and even working happier and even if I was sad, I would still be happy and learn to express to myself and learn to cry and talk about it. And the fields were beautiful, the plants were beautiful. And I shared that with Angel that I was thinking that the state of the plants had to do with how they were feeling and how I was feelings. And then other men, sometimes farmers, would come to work on the fields in Santa Paula and tell me, "Oh you're not doing your job well; it's not gonna work this way." And I would say to them, "Oh okay," but I would really try to tune them out and tell the plants, "No, no, it's gonna work." And then the same workers would come back a couple weeks later and see the progress and be like, "Hey, how did that work out?" So I could see if you have the right attitude and you take care of them, the plants will receive it.

●	Reyna	Relationship/ web	24	24	<p>hat's a good question because now I feel I am just as crazy as everyone else. I can't really explain but we're created from the earth. So if you believe it or not, for me there is a really big connection. There's a phrase in Spanish that says, it's the earth that works. When I'm in the farm I feel free. For years I worked in fields but I didn't have that connection of seeing the creation. Because before, perhaps, my idea of God is that he's in the heavens, he's in the sky, but on the farm, you can see the cycles of life. And not only about just the seeds, so it can be you're not even working in a farm, that your hands aren't in the earth, but this pattern of planting and harvesting – it's in your life. You are always going to harvest what you've been planting. So if you're planting destruction, you're going to harvest destruction. So if you want to create or recreate your life your going to have a resurrection. So that's really how I see this God, this God of second chances that he will always be there to receive you. So it's like I was saying with that one little piece of earth that I had planted twice ya know, once it didn't work, another time it didn't and the third time it did. So maybe the first time it wasn't working because I wasn't putting my heart into it. And then when I did put my heart into it, it did work and it's the same with life.</p>
●	Sarah	Community/ Neighbors	9	9	<p>And I guess I just started to get interested in ecological stewardship, but also more so for me the interest was in community development, building community and what does it look like for the church to be in the world and how do we create kind of alterative communities that support people who are experiencing ya know that support. People are experiencing marginalizing, experiencing major challenges, but also just any, I think we're all searching for community and groundedness and connection. And I was really interested in alternative economic models like cooperatives.</p>
●	Sarah	Community/ Neighbors	13	13	<p>the kind of principles or values of the Abundant Table is reconciliation and looking at reconciliation and ya know beginning with looking at sin as disconnection um and broken relationship or disordered love and that our work is around reconciling those pieces and not that we ourselves are fully reconciled as we do it, but that part of our reconciliation is being reconcilers. I guess I'm trying to think of how to kind of express reconciliation but that thought of restoring right relationship, restoring just relationship, thinking of reconciliation and righteousness as being part of a just and whole world that reflects I guess the trajectory of ya know what scripture and specifically in the New Testament Jesus' trajectory of the beloved community. So I think for us it's been looking at what does it look like to be a reconciler and we say to reconcile to land, reconcile to neighbor, reconcile to ourselves and then reconcile to God. And what needs to, and what spaces and places do we need to be able to do that and be able to live into that and what gets in the way?</p>

●	Sarah	Relationship/ web	20	20	the role of the church is to farm, that the role of the church is to create community through food, through agriculture, that like the way of Christ is kind of creating alternative spaces and opportunities that are housed in relationship. I would say, um that lots of people are creating alternatives but if they are not housed in relationships to each other and to ya know for us and to the earth and to God, exploring kind of a full relationship with yourself I think the alternative just becomes oh I think it becomes its own worst enemy and just becomes part of what breaks us down.
●	Sarah	Community/ Neighbors	22	22	I was very influenced by my experience with the South Central Farmers. I would say that was probably one of the foremost influencers in understanding community and understanding issues of race and class, issues around justice and how those intersect with a predominately white church that is thinking about agriculture and theology and recognizing that there are multiple narratives and the narrative I was coming from was a predominately white narrative that was studying other communities' narratives. And so being part of the South Central Farm and being part of their community, that had its own spirituality that had its own understanding of connection to the land and what it means for community to look like really, um, offered a differed narrative that was coming through I think voices that are not often written about or are doing the writing but are probably some of the most connected to kind of the reality of what's going on and how people and are most impacted by decisions and (sneeze) bless you, um, ya know just most impacted by dominant society
●	Sarah	Relationship/ web	22	22	create space within the Abundant Table to house multiple narratives but then also push a lot of our interns and a lot of people that come into our worshipping community come from places of privilege and dominant cultures and really looking at ways to really push us out of even our most radical notions that have come out of our white church communities and push into just being in relationship to places and spaces and people that are different. So I think the Abundant Table really works to create spaces that push everyone into new relationships that would not normally, yeah.
●	Sarah	Community/ Neighbors	30	30	Kind of outside of the farm my work is community meetings. Doing a lot of work supporting like y a know where does our produce go to creating systemic change, not me personally, but working with groups that are creating systemic change to create more opportunities for just our farm alone to be successful financially.
●	Sarah	Relationship/ web	34	34	Getting to know our soil whenever we move is hard for us and the bugs, getting to know the bugs is hard and the weather patterns. So a lot of what we do is a lot of getting to have a relationship with the land that we are farming on because if not, it will not produce and then we will not be able to pay anyone.

●	Sarah	Relationship/ web animals	36	36	wild animals, the birds and the, we have some gopher snakes
●	Sarah	Relationship/ web animals	38	38	I actually don't like snakes, but I'm learning to appreciate them because these gopher snakes eat the rats and we need that, squirrels which we're not really happy about because they eat our plants.
●	Sarah	Relationship/ web animals	38	38	It's beautiful to see lady bugs, because they're eating the aphids. Lots of, yeah, it's a funny relationship with the animals because whenever you see birds, You're like, "Ope! Gotta get in the fields and starting yelling at them" because you don't want them to eat your plants. Like everything, all the wonderful animals, it's a good sign that they're there because it means it's organic and it means its sustainable and that there's not pesticides and it's a home and a place for them to find food, but it means they're eating your produce. And so it's always kind of balancing that relationship of appreciating that kind of like symbiotic connection but then recognizing and part of the role we play is to get you out of here for the time being so our chard only has so many holes.
●	Sarah	Relationship/ web\animals	38	38	Though one thing I would say what we're hoping.. our kind of dream, dream, dream is to have like a ranch. I think everyone on the team, Reyna, Guadalupe, myself, we'd fill a ranch with animals, like goats and pigs and um, ducks and geese and chickens and so that's the dream that we have, but can't do anything longterm until we find a long term space.
●	Sarah	Community/ Neighbors Relationship/ web	44	44	I think community is one of the most important things for any, for all things, but specifically in agriculture small-scale agriculture, we are dependent on community for survival and I think when we think about, when talk about capital for us it's not just financial capital or monetary capital, it's social capital, it's just essential for our survival and I think for us, we also just really value being in relationship to like the other organizations in our community, the other religious institutions but also our CSA members become a part of our community.
●	Sarah	Community/ Neighbors	44	44	Ya know having a church is part of having our farm, there's plays a big role in what it looks like. Community is people, but community is also kind of it, it's it's it's, um, it's like a container for us to kind of work out all of these things that are important and to and ya know we work out reconciliation and we work out transformation in community and so it kind of contains the experiences we are gonna have to become ya know to live into who we want to be.



●	Sarah	Relationship/ web	46	46	Yeah, our partnerships I think with both the Lutheran and Episcopal church and Cal Lutheran University have been really great. We've, we have a wonderful, I mean there's issues that always come up within the politics of any intuition but have just felt a lot of support and joy and feel like we're a joy for the church and that feels good. We partner a lot with local universities. We are active with some of our local social justice, like the organizations that are working
●	Sarah	Community/ Neighbors Partnership	46	46	We partner a lot with local universities. We are active with some of our local social justice, like the organizations that are working around farm worker's rights, that are working with farm workers directly. We do a lot because we do education in the community, we do a lot of partnerships with nonprofits and we bring our skill set around agricultural literacy and nutrition and health and wellness and we partner with these other nonprofits to create spaces for kind of collaborative learning with their constituencies. We work a lot with the school districts. Farm to school is probably one of our biggest and that has been probably one of the greatest relationships we've developed in creating sustainability for our farm, but also kind of ya know recognizing a larger value in feeling like we are influencing the culture of a school district is really cool.
●	Sarah	Community/ Neighbors Relationship/ web	50	50	also, I will leave the meeting feeling really well respected that people are like, "You're doing so much Sarah, that's so amazing what you're doing." And that makes me feel good. And then as I'm thinking about it, I'm like, "Wait, I'm the one that's working. Like, most of the men are gonna home and not think twice about what's going on. And I'm actually the one developing the proposal or I'm sharing more of the weight of whatever it is that are group is doing because I depend on its success more than anyone else does because everyone else has a job, has family money, are older men, so they're established. And that I'm, my work is around my survival or around the survival of my community. In some way, and I do put some of that to being a female, to being a young adult in this era, not all of it, some of it is just where you were born and happened to land. But that is definitely – it's neat to connect with other women, but then having this ah –ha moment and that everyone's kind of celebrating it but then having this ah ha moment like, we're always working harder because our survival is different.
●	Sarah	Community/ Neighbors Partnership	54	54	Within the Episcopal Church we're really active in developing larger networks very practically that are supporting other communities wanting to do similar things. Recognizing that it's born out of within the Eucharist, within the Episcopal Church, a Eucharistic theology of sin, and reconciliation, faith and formation and just feeding and being fed.

●	Sarah	Community/ Neighbors	54	54	I think we think about community through a lens of faith. Ya know everyone with our community probably uses different words to describe their spirituality and their faith. But I would say we are definitely committed to the Christian journey and we're committed to the Jesus story but also very ecumenical and interfaith in our approach – recognizing that everyone needs to be rooted in their own traditions to better engage and these conversations around ya know ecology and environmental stewardship.
●	Sarah	Community/ Neighbors Partnership	58	58	And some of that is the story, I think for us it's the stories of farm workers, it's the stories of migration, it's the stories of ya know, stories of the land and the earth and relationships that have been harmed but then also the good stories.
●	Sarah	Community/ Neighbors Partnership	77	77	Every time it's just we put it out to people. We start letting know folks we are looking. Actually, every time we've had to look we just get so much support from folks helping us look for, find something. So we get lots of offers, most are not viable at all which is that is the problem, most are just, "What about this" which is not a real option. But that's usually how and we just come across the next right fit and pursue that. So that's good, actually our next, we are looking at talking to the local school districts about leasing land. Getting a long term lease from a local school district to grow produce for their school, their larger community and then do on site education with the youth.
●	Sarah	Community/ Neighbors Partnership	79	79	Yeah and we feel like that could be long term possibility because a lot of schools around here bought out, bought up a lot of land thinking they would expand and they are just renting it out to other growers. So to be able to kind of, instead they could lease it to us and get the benefit of the education component.
●	Sarah	Community/ Neighbors Relationship/ web	83	83	Yeah, and we have great relationships, so I think there'd be a lot of great advocates. I feel like we're in a great position. One of the things I would say is our survival is so connected to the web of support we create in our community.
●	Sarah	Community/ Neighbors Relationship/ web	87	87	But on the positive side, what does happen is that we meet new people and make new friends and it builds this kind of bigger community that we could've never anticipated. And I think because our team comes with such, approaches everything with such joy and connection and that relationship is such an important piece no matter where we go we create great relationships. Like we still have relationships at the previous farm that we still go to lunch with and like I think that would happen here again.
●	Sarah	Community/ Neighbors	87	87	Like the other workers who are here that see a different way of how we do things and also just inspiring folks who are in sustainable agriculture to not just see it as production but like to really see a different side and so I think, I think we've been a gift to every place we've gone.

●	Sarah	Community/ Neighbors	105	105	context of our county, if we had all the time in the world I'd love to do a campaign to talk to retiring farmers to convince them why it would be so important to maybe gift some of their land to up and coming growers versus selling it all off. I know they're under pressure to figure out how to keep their world working financially. Ya know the time to explore, to create land trusts. Ya know things like that I think do make a difference. I think figuring out different investment structures, but recognizing the farmer can't be the only one leading the charge for each of these pieces; it really takes the community and other people and other organizations to invest their time and energy. Being able to create more opportunities and land potential. Growers, there's only 6% of farmers are under the age of 36 which is, I mean, and most of them are quitting at some point, so if it doesn't change it's just gonna be consolidated, we're just gonna eat consolidated food, which is pretty much what we do already, but like most of the organic, even organic is mostly consolidated now.
●	Sarah	Community/ Neighbors Partnership	111	111	we're definitely trying to get our story out. I feel like our two um, well... I definitely think we want to be an example or a leader in kind of the religious communities around seeing this as not just a trend or um, ... a side project but that it's a core narrative that we would like to see religious communities, specifically the church, pick up and really want them to know and about, how we can, why it's a core narrative.
●	Sarah	Community/ Neighbors Partnership	113	113	I mean it's uniquely we work within the Episcopal church, but feeling like that ya know it's really a broader conversation. Um, Ya know I think within the academic world talking about wanting the stories that are coming up from literally from the ground are informing any sort of theory that is being developed around food sustainability, spirituality, theology, but I mean secular or religions. So often it's not connected or it's a story that becomes like a thing um, but its different. But I just think actually the biggest thing is recognizing every story is so different. Yeah, and then, I think the small farming comm... like really wanting to like, really wanting to work with other small farmers to figure out what long term sustainability and viability looks like. And then eaters, eaters should know. All eaters should know.
●	Sarah	Community/ Neighbors Partnership	119	119	National Young Farmer's Coalition and they just send emails. I think it's just really kind of trying – it's when the advocacy plan is connected to the real needs that need to be met that that's where the traction comes. I know here locally there's a farm worker bill that's coming and that they're trying to get the country to pass and that they've done a good job of meeting with farmers and getting people involved and I think that is it's that connection, yeah, that relationship and showing, seeing that potential of the community investment might be.

●	Sarah	Community/ Neighbors	121	121	They want to at least move it a statewide conversation but felt like it's easier to pass something at the country level and then as an example and then to, and our farm and Phil's farm, we're the only two farmers who have signed on so far, but they've interviewed several others but it's controversial. And it's coming from a controversial organization too, which we like them, but I recognize in politics things are left or right and people don't see in the middle.
●	Sarah	Community/ Neighbors	129	129	Because I think it's, I think it's something that is hopeful, um, I think it's also something that when they come and experience and visit, they experience community in a way they rarely ever do in their own church community and I think they experience a connection to creation in a way that they never experience
●	Sarah	Community/ Neighbors Relationship/ web	131	131	because we'll have like a land blessing or I'll have a service or they come to one of our weekend CSA event and it's just, I think because our staff and our team is in such good spirit and are excited to connect, they see the health of our organization. And I think that's actually a big thing, people feel how healthy we are and I think so many churches are unhealthy and people, politics, and dynamics, and it's like you're arguing over the linen or where this decoration is going to go and what's happened is people are stuck and even, not that we don't have the things that kind of get us stuck, but I think we work really really hard to model healthy relationship and not just healthy relationship to how we farm, but healthy relationship to how we interact with each other and I think people see that and experience that and so that's kind of the experience of community where it's like this mutuality of care and love and support and celebration versus just kind of perpetuating what we've always done. And we perpetuate what we've always done, but I think in a diff... in a way that doesn't I think just feels stifling.

●	Spiritual practice	Alice	Spirituality	32	32	<p>we have struggled with spiritual practice - which is maybe why you're asking this question – I don't know - but we have really struggled with any kind of consistent spiritual practice on our farm. Which makes me sad, but which doesn't make other people sad. So, yeah, we are like this spiritually-based farm that is super open and wants people of all faiths, or of none, to be welcome and included here, and I would like to – within that framework – to still have some spiritual practice. And it is hard to, um, find something that everybody loves. And it's also hard to initiate things when people have quite different practices. A lot of people, I think, more and more in the world, or in the United States, just are uncomfortable with spirituality or, definitely religion. And so, yeah, would like to just avoid it altogether or are instantly... associate any spiritual conversation with some sort-of negative, like, proselytizing experience they've had. So, that's a really hard culture to navigate for me. So, the one thing that we've found to be universally un-offensive – is a practice that I love – which is, well you kind-of saw a shorter version of it with our 'Roses, Buds, and Thorns' today at the end of our harvest – but we do our consolations and desolations – usually at lunchtime – and that's every day, with whoever is here for lunch... but we didn't do it today. And, yeah, actually, I got that practice from Gary. He's really into, sort-of the Ignatian examen, and it's like the super short and easy examen exercise. And what I like about it is it's an opportunity for people to become closer to each other and it's an opportunity to self-reflect about what it is that gives me joy, and what it is that's hard for me. And I like that exercise as an exercise for myself or for a person as like, but it's not so... it's like a slow and patient spiritual exercise, I guess, in that, like - let's just notice everyday – or, for me, let's just see if I can notice – all the time – in theory – right? What is giving me joy? And what is painning me? And to listen to that. And if it gives me joy – is it a real joy? Or is it just a momentary satisfaction? And if it is a pain – is it a real, like, heart-soreness? is it bitter-sweet? Or is it, you know, am I ... Did I just not get what I wanted, or am I really sad? Is it sad for the world? And what does that mean? And, how can I use that information to change how I live in the world? You know, whether that's to follow my joy, and follow the things that give me life; or to be like, wow – this is something that gives me pain, day after day, and my heart is aching about this so much, like, you know - should I be making it more of a priority in my decisions? or like, It's just the very simple... do I need to make an amend today? Because, I feel really guilty? Or I feel really bad about this interaction – why do I feel bad about that interaction? Like, what really went on there? And, do I just need to go talk to that person and be like, "Hey, I'm sorry for what I said." Or like, "What's going on?", "I want to get closer again," "What happened?" and you know, "Do you want to talk about it?" I feel like it's a window into</p>
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●	Alice	Spirituality	126	126	I feel like my faith is connected to everything. It's connected to everything that I do. And I feel like that Spirit is connected to everything that is. I feel like one of my missions for the farm, and it is one of the missions of the farm – is to provide, like, this open, but encouraging spiritual space for people. And I think that's really important, and again – not in that sort-of religious sense, but in that all-encompassing sense that I think a lot of people have a spiritual hunger. And I don't have an agenda for what they should believe, but I really want to, I really want to encourage them to explore what it is they do believe. And listen to each other – like what – it's like I want them to expand what they believe, I guess – not necessarily to be what I believe, but just... I just want to challenge them, I guess.
●	Alice	God/ Spirituality	128	129	<p>I wanna help people learn about farming. I want to help people learn about ecology, and sustainability. But I really want them to really explore those things – like – Who am I? What do I believe? What would that look like? And like - What if I tried? ... But, I guess for me, the other thing is like, because of my faith... and I guess this is like a big thing in the Catholic Worker – it's like – Well, if I believe in God, and I believe that... something is right, then what am I afraid of? Then, I should to that. Like, if there's a risk, I should let that go. I should trust in God that... if I do the right thing [1:00:00] then it will be alright. And I won't necessarily get what I want, but that will, that will be the best thing to have done – it will have the best results in the big picture.</p> <p>And, sometimes, that has been incredibly easy for me to believe. And it has been easy for me to take a lot of risks in that position of faith, and in that confidence; other times, I don't necessarily have all the feelings that go with that. But, I, maybe I'm in a bad habit of doing it anyway... It'll be like, "okay..." What am I gonna lose?</p>

●	Spiritual practice	Alice	Spirituality	130	132	<p>KR: So, in those moments when you see God, or the Spirit, in everything in this place – what does that look like to you?</p> <p>A: What does it look like to me? Um... Just so many different things it could look like. You know, it can look like the sky, or it can look like frost, or dew in the morning. You know, it can... it can definitely look like watching someone who – it's like – watching people learn. Especially if you get to be with them long enough when they're learning, when they, like, start having confidence, and creativity, and ideas, and leadership – it's exciting to see that. For me, like, going down, and going out by myself in the woods. And, like, lying on the ground – I definitely like praying lying down, or meditating, or whatever that... like, I just feel really close to everything – connected...</p> <p>Yeah, you know, I mean, it just... yeah, so many different things - somebody laughing, or crying, being really real. I like it when people are being really real, or really open, or vulnerable...</p>
●		Alice	Spirituality/scripture	139	141	<p>it was some discussion between a number of people, but for me – again, I really think seeds are just amazing and I - in the Bible - like, the, you know... they use of the mustard seed is – yeah, this idea of this thing that's so small and can, either become so great - you know, so like – such a big – the biggest plant and the birds are roosting in it, and it's sort of like this home for everything it's just... but it starts, or this idea that if you have just this tiny bit of faith you can move mountains – and, I mean for me that's encouraging – you know – and that's all we have, I guess. Like, all we're going to be able to do in life is these little things – and it's encouraging that, like, you know – I'm not gonna have this great amount of faith, or this huge, amazing, like, you know – I don't know – like, I'm not gonna be in a history book 'cause I've done this amazing thing – like...</p> <p>KR: You'll be in mine [laughter]</p> <p>A: I mean; people aren't gonna read about me in... I mean, I don't know – maybe some Catholic Workers – but I'm not, like, gonna be this huge deal on this huge scale – you know, I'm not gonna ... but like, this idea that like, you know, just a little bit could maybe take fruit in some... big – or wide – or lots of little ways – I don't know, it just is... it's encouraging that all we need to have is a little bit of faith; or all we need to do is a little bit of something.</p>

●		Louise2	Spirituality/God	4	4	And I think I've talked to you about how we really don't feel like we own this land, it's just, we're just... it's a gift to us; it's on loan and we try to treat it that way. That we would try to steward this land so that, if anything, we could improve it, and take good care of it. And that's it's really just on loan from God. We're very grateful that we get to live here. We say prayers of thanks for that every day.
●		Louise2	God	14	14	And with the native trees, it just, I fully realized that man came and they, in a sense, developed this land. It's like building a housing development or something. They said, which is what we would do in modern-day, but they... man came and they said, "I can use this for this, and that for that, and it's all for me." But there were plants that were here that developed before anybody else was here, before any people were here. And so it's really kind of like God's garden. And it just seems like we really ought to try and preserve that. And delicate soil very lacking in organic matter. It is easily abused.
●		Louise2	God	17	17	That that was Moa fern. It's just, it's like a link to the past. And what really belongs here. The climate is such that you can grow almost anything here. But to try to preserve some of the plants that, just, that God planted, and they're in danger because of all the stuff that man has done to this land. that idea just grabbed us, and we said, "Oh, that would be really nice if we could have more native plants." And we had no idea how many there were, where they would grow, who should be here.
●	practice	Louise2	Spirituality/God	25	25	that nature is, is the place where I experience God most. And that it has provided me the most comfort at the very worst times in my life. I remember the very worst thing that ever happened to me, the only thing I could do, the only thing I could think of to take away the pain and the feeling of just utter desolation was to lie down flat on the ground under a tree and hug the earth. And so I feel that I'm just a part of creation. And that's a very profound feeling. It's not that it's my job to name everything and to have dominion over it. It is that I'm just a small part of creation. And that's really part of my theology. And so the idea of going back to the garden, is something that brings me closer to God. More than anything else, really. And once you, it's a good place to get your grounding.
●		Louise2	God	26	26	You try to grow these plants and you find out, well, they have just a hard a time as humans do. And, I don't like to interfere with them too much, but I really respect them and just the beauty. It just amazes me. The variety and the, it makes me humble. And I think that's a good thing. That brings me closer to God too. So, it is a very faith-based endeavor. It has been from the very beginning.



●		Louise2	God/ Spirituality	62	62	And again, it's what draws me to the Spirit; to the Divine. To just be humbled by the butterfly that's passing by. And talk to it, and say, "hey!" you know, and just to bring it into your presence, and not be on auto pilot... and "I'm thinking about the trip to town..." and just to be able to be on the land and be really mindfully present there is really important to me. And that it doesn't matter whether it's just my land. One of my friends, I remember saying, "everybody needs a special piece of land that they feel connected with. That is their connection to the earth." And, friend said, "do you have to own it?" And I said, "No. No you don't. It could be, it can be in a public forest. It can be in a park. It can be anywhere. But it's important for us as children of the earth to be present there. To have that special place where we can go." And sure, I'm speaking through my lens, but that's my lens. That's what I need.
●		Louise2	Spirituality	118	119	But, what is the connection of faith of your farm?  L: Hmmm. Fundamental. Not "fundamental-ist", but fundamental.
●	practice	Louise2	God/Spirituali ty	121	121	I'm in God's country, and it feeds my faith. And it is the way in. It is the best way that I am connected to God. I marvel at his creation. All the time. And as I said to you the other day, it could be so boring, creation that is.. You know. And it's not. It's not at all. It's so magically whimsical and special that it points to a Creator. And I really like being in that space, because it keeps me spiritually grounded. And I... and it causes me to pray. And it causes me to speak to God. To give thanks. To offer praise. And to be humble in the face of it. So, it's really fundamental to my faith life.
●		Louise2	God/Spirituali ty	127	127	I'm takin' care of what He's given us. And that's the basic thing. Humans, with our free choice can do so much harm. And I just want to be a good steward of the gifts that He has lent us. And, yep. That's it. In a nutshell. A Macadamia nutshell. (laughter) Um, it is that desire to be grateful. And to show our gratefulness by care. And by trying to do right by His gifts.
●		Louise2	Spirituality	212	212	And that earth-honoring faith is really important.
●		Amber2	God/Scripture	8	8	And you really towards the end of college is when I really committed my life to Jesus and following and just being in the word consistently and my own, working on my own thoughts, not listening to somebody else's thoughts. So I think once I started reading the word then you really started seeing the beauty of the farm. The service, the commitment, the suffering, the, you know you just, it was a real contrast from coming into this business world and this trajectory and you were gonna do all these things

●	Amber2	God	8	8	o I felt God was asking me to come back home and um, then, I thought it was gonna be more ministry. Thought I would do some business work on the side you know just to pay the bills and um, I remember my brother being so excited for me to be home just so mom would have more help and we, you know, so it was really good. And then he died three months later, so then I felt that was God's answer.
●	Amber2	God/scripture	14	14	So the more you read God's word and you come into, I mean I told you my verse, "The righteous man cares for the needs of his animals, but the kindest act of the wicked is cruel." [NOTE: Proverbs 12:10] Your faith is definitely lived out as a farmer. Um, the earth is the Lord's and everything in it. The world and all who live in it. Just that idea of God being over all of this, the vastness of nature, when God asserts Himself in the Bible it's often just reminding you that He's the one who makes the sun rise and set. But yet, it happens to quietly. So I think scripture coming into the dailyness and the faithfulness of this, um, is such an interesting combination. It comes alive. So, does the work itself, do I love it? You know. Um, it's hard to say. When it's fueled by God and worship of Him, yes. I love it and I love watching, reading through the word and understanding and just understanding things that you wouldn't understand. I'm thinking like in Malachi when it says, "One day we'll leap like calves released from the stall." (laughter) I know that that looks like. So you know I think that, there's other things too. It talks about being, as you're waiting for Jesus to return you should be a wise and faithful servant just handing out God's word. And I think about how ordinary that is, but that's like what we do with the cows. It's not new. It's not exciting. We're not looking to change their lives.
●	Amber2	Spirituality God/ Scripture	14	14	Your faith is definitely lived out as a farmer. Um, the earth is the Lord's and everything in it. The world and all who live in it. Just that idea of God being over all of this, the vastness of nature, when God asserts Himself in the Bible it's often just reminding you that He's the one who makes the sun rise and set. But yet, it happens to quietly. So I think scripture coming into the dailyness and the faithfulness of this, um, is such an interesting combination. It comes alive. So, does the work itself, do I love it? You know. Um, it's hard to say. When it's fueled by God and worship of Him, yes. I love it and I love watching, reading through the word and understanding and just understanding things that you wouldn't understand. I'm thinking like in Malachi when it says, "One day we'll leap like calves released from the stall." (laughter) I know that that looks like. So you know I think that, there's other things too. It talks about being, as you're waiting for Jesus to return you should be a wise and faithful servant just handing out God's word. And I think about how ordinary that is, but that's like what we do with the cows. It's not new. It's not exciting. We're not looking to change their lives.

●	practice	Amber2	Spirituality/ God Scripture	22	22	Yeah. And Jesus used the natural world all the time in his parables and he looked at life around him. Look at the sparrow; look at the wild flowers. So I think Jesus gives you permission to be contemplative. The world doesn't necessarily give that to you and that space, but it almost feels like you have to defend yourself sometimes and be like, "I am doing something. I'm contemplating!" (hearty laughter) You know like, "Oh okay, honey." It's like..oooh. So I think that's where I am right now as far as, but definitely, faith has been huge, a huge part of seeing the beauty of this place and embracing it. You know I was kind of born into the story, but I've had to grow into it. And in a different way than if I made the choice, "Hey this is gonna be my family. I'm gonna go get married. I'm gonna..." you know I feel like I never had that and God's actually giving that to me now and saying, "you get to choose." Where Christ has kind of chosen for me for a lot of years and I'm okay with that. That was His plan and um, I'm walking through. Okay good. That was long. Influences.
●	practice	Amber2	God/scripture	26	26	God is a kind Father who greets me in the morning versus condemns me in the morning. You know saying, "Get up! Get up!" I think he's just going, "Come on. Let's come. I know your brain's a little a fuzzy and you're getting up early because you have to." So I spend time with Him and then I try to spend time reading, meditating, soaking in, you know just letting the word of God take everything. You know trying not to bring my thoughts into it even, just say, "Okay you know speak, speak today."
●	practice	Amber2	God/scripture	26	26	But one day a week where I have some time where's there's no demands on my schedule. And just spend time just listening and soaking, soaking Him in.
●		Amber2	Spirituality	46	46	Well I think, first of all, the world view of God as a creator. A creator. A perfect creator, it was very good. There is design, there is purpose, there is order, there's such a strong force and it talks about man having this tremendous capacity for good at creation and you can feel that on the farm. I mean the life, I'm gonna say "life force" for lack of a better word.
●		Amber2	God/scripture	46	46	Well I think, first of all, the world view of God as a creator. A creator. A perfect creator, it was very good. There is design, there is purpose, there is order, there's such a strong force and it talks about man having this tremendous capacity for good at creation and you can feel that on the farm. I mean the life, I'm gonna say "life force" for lack of a better word.

●	Amber2	God/scripture	48	48	So, um, that's started as a very practical sort of-Bible, how do you start to do and very much came into the place of the Briscoes they teach Creation, Fall, Redemption, Glory. They are some teachers out of Milwaukee. And um, I love, I love that idea because you feel, you feel that tension. You know the creation, and the capacity for good, but then the terrible for capacity for evil and then there's this transformation that comes through Jesus Christ and we're really still waiting for Glory. So what does this redemption period look like? It's very much this struggle between creation and fall. We can't go back now, we have to go forward and glory will be, gosh, what I'm reading and understanding, like wow. What the new heaven and new earth is gonna be like and how it's gonna bring everything to that you're seeing here, um, Jesus talks about or Isaiah talks about the Messianic reign and when, you know He'll come back with this peace and this righteousness and the wolf will lie down with the lamb and you know all of these nature pictures that they'll be a peace that will be just so penetrating. So things like that boggle me because you see what life looks like right now and you go, "How can that be?" And it kind of just pushes you into Jesus and into Christ.
●	Amber2	Spirituality	48	48	So things like that boggle me because you see what life looks like right now and you go, "How can that be?" And it kind of just pushes you into Jesus and into Christ. Now, I mean that's probably the first, the first wave of it and then you're just looking for people who are recognizing that. And slowing down and saying, "Okay, what matters? What are we doing? How are we, um, how are we living in relation to," um, I think that's been some of the biggest things. How to live in relation to God, other people and the land and I don't think I understood that until I started reading the agrarian a little more.
●	Amber2	God/scripture	50	50	towards your relationship with the land. That's a not, that's not a creation-worshipping-pantheistic sort-of view, it just means the reality is you live within the created order that God put in place, yes, it's fallen, certainly, but God didn't take you out of the world. He said, "You'll, you'll have thorns and you'll fight and you'll return to the dust," and I think they just gave me permission to start really looking at it. Because the, the modern world isn't looking at it.

●		Amber2	God/scripture	50	50	and being a steward where you are which is, you know, it's a weird balance because we are heading to glory and sometimes when Christchurch says, "Oh this world doesn't matter all." It doesn't matter what we do. But I don't think the Bible teaches that, you know. I think we're stewards and everything's reflected there. So, yah, it's just um, yeah like I said a big question and I'm still working through it, but it just gave me some detail and some color and some, a little more dimension to what this worldview um, of creation being creation which 6 days of creation and most of it was the nature around us and we were created at the end to join in to what God had prepared, perfectly prepared for us and still amazingly sustained us with even after the fall. Like, you need evidence of grace, science just makes me think more and more grace because of how finely tuned and how held together it is. Even though we are greedy by nature and doing everything we can to destroy each other and the land, God is still so gracious in holding us together.
●	practice	Amber2	Spirituality	62	62	Being here wholeheartedly. Being present. Watching. You know?
●	practice	Amber2	Spirituality	64	64	Actively staying.
●		Amber2	Spirituality God	64	64	Moving through resignation to just acceptance of this, this is God's greater you know, this, there's greater things going on here. Even though it seems very much like my home and I feel very familiar with it and it just gave me new eyes to say, "you don't know as much as you think you know." Um, watching you know just, paying closer attention to um, the life around you. Not as much going out there to find it but seeing what God is doing here and entering in. I think that has been the most helpful thing for me coming out of um, coming out of that. And even as I say that I am still feeling this call like God is moving me in a different direction, but I understand both now.
●		Amber2	Spirituality/ God	66	66	And I won't go unless I know you know. It won't be to escape this place. The only reason I would go is because His voice is saying, you know "we're going here now" and the Spirit will be, I trust that the Spirit will clearly whisper it in my ear and say, "This is the way." But I think being here and being aware now and, you know not being bitter, not being just having, let God work through all of it. He hasn't changed my circumstances a ton so He's just been working hard on my character and I can't blame, can't blame other things. You know, if you're just like, Oh okay God, you know. This is your hand. And that was good – the agrarian – that reading really helped me and I'm not sure, again, God's provision, I think. And Yeah, now as I move into more music and writing, it's been really fun just to look back and not because you have all the answers or you're gonna tell people you know amazing things, but you know I feel God is asking me to own my testimony. And it doesn't need be dazzling or amazing, it just needs to be real and I think I can do that because of being here. And opening up your heart to all of this and so, yeah.

●	Amber2	Spirituality	70	70	But it's not so much organized, it's more just being open and understanding. Nobody really comes here by accident. You're not here by accident. You know how God arranges. There's a quote from a missionary. it says, "love God. I have two loves in my life: A love for God and a love for the person God happens to have in front of me at the moment." And the farm feels very much like that. You don't have to go out looking. Eventually someone comes and you know they know where you are and, and they come out which is kind of cool. So less us going to them and more God sending them.
●	Amber2	scripture	78	78	Biblically, I think it's important to be a woman and not a poor imitation of a man so the way I approach farm biblically is that I'm not going to be able to do this like a man.
●	Amber2	God/scripture	82	82	So then biblically you can come underneath and say, "God what are you commands?" Because if I know there's commands and they're lined up then I know how you need power to do it. And you know he talks about masters and slaves and I know that's a loaded term, but I just look at it as masters and employees you know and he just asks you to work with all your heart for them and give them. So I think that coming under that structure she's my authority whether she's a woman or man, it didn't matter. She was the authority, but under God it's trying not to be something that I'm not as a farmer. That's been the most important thing as a woman, not to try to be a man. Because that kills your soul.
●	Amber2	God	84	84	I think God's favor has been on us. His story, it's been all these years like, the fruitfulness of our story is being seen now.
●	Amber2	God	86	86	n 50 years of mom's faithfulness and 35 years of faithfulness. In seeing God just bless us abundantly in all the little details of life. You know we don't have a lot of, we don't have a lot of strife. Better one hand full of tranquility than two with strife.
●	Amber2	God/scripture	86	86	And, negotiate and struggle, but I think that's all very biblical and I've learned that through being here you know submitting, it's a beautiful word because God's promising to be on your side when you're doing it according to his plan and he's gonna be the one to protect and provide and further his plans.
●	Amber2	God	88	88	the biggest problem we have is our separation from God and Christ coming to reconcile. So without Jesus Christ as the heart of the issue, no other problems really matter to me. So the root of all is our reconciliation with God. How do we move into that? Then how does that impact everything?

●	Amber2	God/scripture	90	90	<p>You know, every part of our own being, our mind, our soul, our body, our relationships within the family, within the workplace, within the church. How do we, how do we do? You know I was reading second Corinthians and it talks about the fragrance of Christ. I mean we are the fragrance of Christ, we are the salt of the earth, we are the light of the world. I mean you are impacting this world and everything that you do so when you talk about problems that way, I mean being separated from God is a problem. Um, worshipping other things that can't, that can..aren't worthy of your worship that you know, but a lot of those are now ideologies and ideas and I don't think people realize that. So how do you get to the heart of people's issues about their need for God? There's technology which is separating, separating us from God and form each other with the words of saying it's connecting us which is very confusing. You know, well you're not really connected then, well okay, um. So I, so what I see is just you know is kind of one layer after another. It's like okay we're worshipping this and our means, the way we're structuring life is isolating us more and more, um, but I don't know if I see it in one problem. I see it as isolation. I see it as loneliness. I see it as unrootedness. Restlessness. But I overall when I'm around people I see a longing for more so I'm not discouraged by it at all. But on a grand level, you know I hear the levelslabels of the boomers and the millenials, I hate, I hate those labels because when you're talking about a millennial or whatever I'm just gonna look at somebody I know whose living that and have a conversation with them.</p>
●	Amber2	God/scripture	100	100	<p>Our church is a very, has an urban feel to it. Sometimes I feel like it becomes more of a corporate business model in the church than family and I've worked in the corporate world and I've worked in family business. And you can have family business. I do believe Jesus has a mission. We have some work. We can have some shrewdness. We can have some you know putting some things out before him and taking that. But, it's within this structure that's already set of submission and, and coming in and generations and understanding what God says about the beauty of us growing older and that wisdom and that love where you know what and I can feel it at 41. Like I'd much rather serve someone else and breathe whatever life God can breathe through me into them, I would much rather breathe life into yo... I know I have all that, you know what I mean. I have all I need for myself.</p>

●		Amber2	Spirituality	106	106	I say, "Do you think that pleases Jesus Christ?" To have us all in our little corners. I don't think so! You know read the Bible! (Last two sentences, voice gets more intense and passionate) The music becomes very much, and I, so, I get passionate about that, because I mean yes, music is a wonderful expression and it's meant to deeply imbed truth in us and carry it with us. It's not the main point. How you do that. And I think we just get, we get off you know where, how do we grow in our depth with Jesus in this society? I mean that's the question. The farm naturally slows you down and humbles you, but then I also know that there's that tension, um, that some people God really has called to be on the frontier and pushing that, so I guess maybe, maybe it's more on the discipleship side of it and understanding outreach will happen, but maybe it's being that consistent place that's inviting people in and caring for them and tending for them. Now that should be happening. Is it happening? I don't know. And it's probably not gonna be on a big scale. I can't talk, I can't talk to three people the same way I talk to one person.
●	practice	Amber2	God/Spirituality	106	106	I say, "Do you think that pleases Jesus Christ?" To have us all in our little corners. I don't think so! You know read the Bible! (Last two sentences, voice gets more intense and passionate) The music becomes very much, and I, so, I get passionate about that, because I mean yes, music is a wonderful expression and it's meant to deeply imbed truth in us and carry it with us. It's not the main point. How you do that. And I think we just get, we get off you know where, how do we grow in our depth with Jesus in this society? I mean that's the question. The farm naturally slows you down and humbles you, but then I also know that there's that tension, um, that some people God really has called to be on the frontier and pushing that, so I guess maybe, maybe it's more on the discipleship side of it and understanding outreach will happen, but maybe it's being that consistent place that's inviting people in and caring for them and tending for them. Now that should be happening. Is it happening? I don't know. And it's probably not gonna be on a big scale. I can't talk, I can't talk to three people the same way I talk to one person.
●		Amber2	God/scripture	112	112	but do you believe you live in the garden right now or do you believe you live in a desert? Because it matters. If you believe we live in the garden, every time you have a lack your going to doubt if God is good. But if you believe we're living in the desert, every provision, every cup of water, every shade is going to be blessing and gratitude and in America what do we do with this? We think we're in the garden and if we don't have everything just the way we want it, we're having great doubts of God and throwing, as opposed, I think that's the blessing. That's why God says blessed are the persecuted. I mean there's a simplicity in your life going, "this is it."



●	practice	Amber2	Spirituality	114	114	I've often thought the farm could be a ministry place and sometimes more of a spiritual retreat type place where you, where you do invite somebody to just come walk the pace, walk the pace with you. Just walk through and then have little places where scripture you know, could fill in. But is that realistic? You know? Is that, is something like that, yeah, that seems like such a small, small place.
●		Amber2	God	166	166	I think when God, when I saw God's hand come and take my father I had a real sense that there were greater things going on here. It wasn't so much fear, I can't tell you that. I wasn't afraid of death at that point. But that fear of reverence of understanding that there is a God and understanding the importance of being, being where you are.
●		Amber2	Spirituality/ God	166	166	So your faith gets really, you know gets down and its, it gets in there. It's not lofty. I mean it is lofty, it's transcendent, it's imminent. You know, that idea and the farm gives you this structure of circumstance what I was saying before. My circumstances don't change day-to-day. So you've come into this rhythm and your character is what is laid bare. You know what you believe, really your faith, you don't get to hide and sometimes I would love to have something to do because then I would have a project and then I could kind of hide under that project. That's not a bad thing. It's not a bad thing to have a project. But when God takes it away and just brings you back down to the simple faith in Christ, are you ready? So I think it's been very challenging through all those. It goes deep, it keeps challenging you, it keeps pushing you. You, you know it's like this experience happens and it pushes you back into the word to come through again, you're learning. I've seen so often how exactly what God is teaching him, he'll send me like three people within two week who, you're not thinking "I'm gonna teach you what I just learned," but listen to them and then they're telling you something and you go, "Oh, well God was kind of showing me this." And they'll go (sharp intake of surprise breath). And you'll go, "Oh, that wasn't me, that was God."
●		Amber2	Spirituality/ God	166	166	Faith, when you're where you are and you're not going with that program, I'm gonna go evangelize or preach, or it's more I'm listening. Maybe it's the wisdom aspect, the practical living. So um, I think that's, it's just there, they're all connected. It's not something, it can be separated and as I'm looking at asking God and choosing to be here and all of that, I'm realizing that, but also faith is so much more than this.

●		Amber2	God	172	172	I want that to be growing, growing here. And I think that that's right now what I'm learning. I can't tell you why He has me here, but there has to be more for me to learn here or God would move me somewhere else. There's a purpose here and I think for me right now this, I realize that most of this wasn't about me. And that's okay because it's His glory. It was to bring a measure of joy and life to my mom. It was to watch Sam and Gracie come into it. No matter what happens, this is a beautiful way to watch them grow up and connect and so just celebrating I think what, what He's doing, what He's doing around you.
●		Judy2	God/scripture	9	9	And then I said, "with God we can do all things through Christ who gives strength."
●	practice	Judy2	God	13	13	Like Jill Briscoe says "Waiting is suffering" (laughs) ya know and it's true – it's like we're suffering through this waiting period to see what God has in store for her too. And I'm ready to go wherever ya know. I'm here, I mean I'm not going to retire until God makes me retire. As long as I'm able to work, I would like to work.
●		Judy2	God/scripture	17	17	He tells you you have to work and you're not working for yourself. You're always working for him, so it's like well, I mean it just keeps inspiring you, you know the planting in the spring and then the watching it grow and the harvest and you had nothing to do about it and say. You know you put the the seeds in the ground, but from there it's all according to His plans. You know I guess I'd say that's probably it more than anything. And I enjoy what I'm doing. I mean I love working outside.
●		Judy2	God	88	88	Yeah, that God so in charge of it. Yeah.
●		Judy2	God/scripture	92	92	Yeah, that's what you do, you,..and until God makes me retire, then I'm here. You know by that time maybe Sam will be ready to take over then, but until that time he's not yet you know. He still has a few years to go so we'll see what happens in between. We don't have any say over what's going to happen today or tomorrow.
●		Judy2	God	93	94	so what is the connection of faith to your farm? That's the first part of this question so we'll just start there.  J: Probably everything. You know as far as that goes because it's like what do we do without God. I mean it's like He's the one who takes care of everything so yeah.
●		Judy2	God	98	98	That's pretty much we don't have much to say about anything. Whatever is here. Even cows sometimes will have cows that something happens to. You know like maybe they'll get mastitis or maybe they'll get sick or something. So then we'll have some heifers that are waiting to come in the barn to freshen. And it's like we say, "Well God's just moving that one out to make room for another one." You know so pretty much of what happens around here we just figure it's all under His control you know yeah.

●		Judy2	God	104	104	Yeah it'd be a lot harder maybe and now milk prices are down and stuff you know, it'd be hard if had a big debt load and stuff too. Which we did years ago when we just started out. I mean when John was putting this farm together we had a huge debt load. You know but God just provided and it's like, yeah, all of a sudden it's all paid for and many years already too, so... and he had to die to do that, which wasn't good (she laughs a little). You know he had a nice life insurance policy that helped pay for a chunk of land...but it's like yeah, that wasn't always good.
●	practice	Judy2	scripture	110	110	I don't know we just kind of mind our own business and kind of do our own thing. And there's a verse in the Bible that says that "mind your own business," I can't remember which one it is – Thessalonians... I can't remember which one it is. But there is a verse in the bible that says something like that, "Mind your own business. Be joyful." Or whatever, I can't remember. I could look it up but.
●	practice	Judy2	God/scripture Spirituality	130	130	This is the day that the Lord hath made. I will rejoice and be glad in it.
●	practice	Judy2	God/spiritualit y	135	139	K: 'Cause life has not dealt you the easiest of hands, so but your spirit is...  J: Yeah, but you learn from that you know.  K: But your spirit is so joyful and admirable.  J: Yeah, and it's all 'cause of Him.  K: But I watched you yesterday walk into that barn and just light up and it was just really beautiful to follow you yesterday and see that so thank you.
●	practice	Jeannette2	Spirituality	91	91	we are a spiritual bunch so we really like the birds and the bees and seeing the herons and there are tons of hawks that are constantly hunting in the fields so we love seeing them but as far as farmers go, it's not good (laughs). So you know, Guadalupe has his slingshot and he'll slingshot at them. And we try to put, ya know, little shiny ribbons to get rid of them.
●	practice	Jeannette2	Spirituality	97	97	I do farming because it's fulfilling work, it's meaningful work. It's really nice to have a steady flow of nutrient dense vegetables in the kitchen. It's also really a spiritual practice for me, especially weeding. Weeding is like my favorite thing about farming (laughter). I know, it took a long time to get there, but it's a daily practice and it's a, really meaningful to run your hands over an entire, touch every single plant in a row as you're removing the weeds. It helps with the weeding in your brain too – that's a really cheesy metaphor

●		Jeannette2	Spirituality	97	97	our spiritual life as a community through the Abundant Table Church, farm church, is so connected with this farm. And on a deeper level to because we have been on different pieces of land, so it's not like we are tied to land. We're tied to a community and that community roots into a piece of land, whatever piece of land that is. And it's not ideal, it's interesting to see how we're able to ... be.. be a community... be a farm community that doesn't really have a farm.
●	practice	Jeannette2	Spirituality/ God	97	97	So, I think because our spirituality is so connected with farming - it's every day is a spiritual practice – and sometimes we get caught up in Wednesday morning [CSA pack day] running around AHHHH; your body hurts and all of that stuff. But I think, at this point after doing every day for so many years, there's always that spiritual component of like, getting to know more about God – the masculine, feminine, everything side of God that is reflected right back at you when you're engaging in stewarding the land or taking care of the land. I mean, it's such a treat, it's such a blessing to be able to see who, find out more God by coming to a five acre little piece of land like every day of your life almost and seeing the difference between the differences between every hour and differences every month and every year and how that reflects a lot of things about yourself and about spirituality back.
●		Jeannette2	God/scripture	119	119	A little church on the Westside of Los Angeles called St. John's Presbyterian Church. So I grew up heavily involved in that and was there, but Evergreen helped me ya know really feel it, feel like understand more about God... and how...maybe this uh, this sin-thing was not like everything about religion and that there are other components that we should be worried about and thinking about. And I didn't really tackle that concept until I came back here and realized, huh, I feel like you can still be a Christian and do a lot of the things they told me I couldn't do.
●		Jeannette2	Spirituality /God	119	119	But it was really difficult for me to see God in Los Angeles and Evergreen with its beautiful landscape was kind of the first place that I was like, Of course! Yes, here She is like right here staring at you through the trees and on the tangle of green on the side of the road. She's everywhere, He's everywhere and um, so I think this work here is important in my own spirituality because it's all about slowing down and ...and learning about the infinite other lives and ecosystems that exist underneath the soil and in the air and around us and um, seeing like that interconnected web of life that exists on this farm and if you tug on one little part of it, over there something will fall over and we are never going to be able to see all these little strings that tie everything together. But they are stories for us to try to unravel to find out more about God and the world that we live in... Yeah.
●		Reyna	Spirituality	5	5	I started working and hearing a lot about faith and earth and faith and land. What were these hippies talking about, were they smoking weed? (we all laugh). I really felt like a transition between being just someone who worked in the fields to someone who was really involved in the work.

●		Reyna	God/spirituality	7	7	But that started even reaching deeper layers. A lot more into God and faith side, started learning or awakening that. I was realizing, “Hey I’m not even smoking marijuana and all of a sudden I’m on the same page as everybody and all of a sudden I’m connecting.” (all laugh) To see how like similar we are to the plants, realizing how similar we are to the plants. So it’s been really satisfying and amazing to see how even in deep composition and compost, you end up with this even more nutrient rich earth.
●	practice	Reyna	Spirituality	7	7	But that started even reaching deeper layers. A lot more into God and faith side, started learning or awakening that. I was realizing, “Hey I’m not even smoking marijuana and all of a sudden I’m on the same page as everybody and all of a sudden I’m connecting.” (all laugh) To see how like similar we are to the plants, realizing how similar we are to the plants. So it’s been really satisfying and amazing to see how even in deep composition and compost, you end up with this even more nutrient rich earth. And it’s very similar to the people. Because ya know it’s very similar to people in that after having a difficult life, not being victim, but having a difficult life, I am making the comparison that earth, sometimes you may even think you are living a shitty life, excuse the language, ya know through kind of like all that death, you can be reborn in a very fertile place. How the farm really needs the energy of someone to take care of it. I realized too that the earth needs someone to take care, maybe I need someone to take care of her, not necessarily another person, but like God. And ya know a force a much bigger force.
●		Reyna	God	9	9	But sometimes I felt desperate like now what do I do? So I’m kind of mixing both issues, both topics of agriculture and faith. I was, as I was going through this process, I was also going through, on the land, with the agriculture, I was going through the same process with my faith. and what I call God.
●		Reyna	God/Spirituality	11	11	So instead of coincidence, you could say a God-incidence (It sounds better in Spanish), play on words. I don’t believe in coincidence, so it was a God-incidence. For some reason it was Angel who started working here first at the Abundant Table and he was only looking for like a temporary job for only two months.
●		Reyna	God	24	24	For years I worked in fields but I didn’t have that connection of seeing the creation. Because before, perhaps, my idea of God is that he’s in the heavens, he’s in the sky, but on the farm, you can see the cycles of life. And not only about just the seeds, so it can be you’re not even working in a farm, that your hands aren’t in the earth, but this pattern of planting and harvesting – it’s in your life. You are always going to harvest what you’ve been planting. So if you’re planting destruction, you’re going to harvest destruction. So if you want to create or recreate your life your going to have a resurrection. So that’s really how I see this God, this God of second chances that he will always be there to receive you

●		Reyna	Spirituality/ God	25	25	I can give the example of my life. I came from Mexico when I was 14. My father was an alcoholic and drug addict. My mom was in a really destructive relationship. So I came running away from that, rebel, looking for a new start. But the roots of the bad weeds were deeply rooted in my heart. And even though I stated to create my own family, having daughters, but yeah, deep inside I wasn't happy. Because I still had those really heavy things weighing me down. So one day I was really mad and angry at God, then teach me how to it and then he taught her how to take care of a plant. So then after I learned that, I thought, okay then you do the same for me, put me in your hands and take care of me. (by this point both Reyna and translator were crying) really wanted to believe he existed. But it was really difficult because the weeds were really deep and really strong. But he showed me the way because when all the pain came out of my heart, I really experienced a death and resurrection in that moment and I was able to forgive my parents. Then I could really see how God was creating another life in me. So that's my relationship with faith. I feel like a plant doesn't actually have control over anything, but I can have strong roots and let God take care of me.
●		Sarah	God/Spirituali ty	11	11	And then also I think for me just vocationally beginning to create spaces for other people to explore their own ...their own journeys, their own kind of needs for connection, and that was something I think I've really grown to value is recognizing the church as a place that creates um, where we kind of like are architects of space for others to ya know encounter God and encounter themselves, encounter their neighbor in a way that leads to transformation.
●	practice	Sarah	God/Spirituali ty	13	13	So I think for us it's been looking at what does it look like to be a reconciler and we say to reconcile to land, reconcile to neighbor, reconcile to ourselves and then reconcile to God. And what needs to, and what spaces and places do we need to be able to do that and be able to live into that and what gets in the way?
●	practice	Sarah	God/spiritualit y	20	20	I would say, um that lots of people are creating alternatives but if they are not housed in relationships to each other and to ya know for us and to the earth and to God, exploring kind of a full relationship with yourself I think the alternative just becomes oh I think it becomes its own worst enemy and just becomes part of what breaks us down.

●		Sarah	Spirituality	22	22	I was very influenced by my experience with the South Central Farmers. I would say that was probably one of the foremost influencers in understanding community and understanding issues of race and class, issues around justice and how those intersect with a predominately white church that is thinking about agriculture and theology and recognizing that there are multiple narratives and the narrative I was coming from was a predominately white narrative that was studying other communities' narratives. And so being part of the South Central Farm and being part of their community, that had its own spirituality that had its own understanding of connection to the land and what it means for community to look like really, um, offered a differed narrative that was coming through I think voices that are not often written about or are doing the writing but are probably some of the most connected to kind of the reality of what's going on and how people and are most impacted by decisions and (sneeze) bless you, um, ya know just most impacted by dominant society
●	practie	Sarah	Spirituality	54	54	I would say initially there is kind of a subtle, kind of undergirding like foundational layer of spirituality that anyone experiences when they connect to farming and to agriculture, to growing food. Our organization, myself, the people that are part of our organization are very explicit about it though, which is why we do feel that our worship service is such a tangible kind of, in a sense the farm is an outgrowth, or like was born out of our worship and our prayer, but now it feeds ..the farm, the farm both feeds figuratively but also literally because we have a potluck afterwards and everyone, our CSA members bring their food. So that breaking bread together both ya know bread and wine around the table at Eucharist and then it happens with like salad and soup afterwards. And then that's very much like feeling like we're practicing our faith and we're practicing what we believe about feeding and being fed.
●		Sarah	Spirituality	54	54	But I think we're also exploring what is the language that we want to use to talk about spirituality and faith and ecology and stewardship and the theology of place. We were actually saying a theology of place and displacement because it seems you can't talk about place without talking about displacement because I think that's what pretty much everyone in our community has experienced. And then, so how do we begin to explore replacing ourselves every time we're displaced and what's the role we play? Like what's the role of faith in leaving a place and coming to a new place?
●		Sarah	Spirituality	54	54	I think we think about community through a lens of faith. Ya know everyone with our community probably uses different words to describe their spirituality and their faith. But I would say we are definitely committed to the Christian journey and we're committed to the Jesus story but also very ecumenical and interfaith in our approach – recognizing that everyone needs to be rooted in their own traditions to better engage and these conversations around ya know ecology and environmental stewardship.

●	practice	Sarah	Spirituality	58	58	the spirituality of Abundant Table. I don't, I'd probably have to think about it more.... (long pause).... I, ya know, I think our spirituality is definitely thinking of the word rooted and radical as being connected right? Like roots are really important to us but and in that kind of radical pushing, we want to be on the edge of the church kind of pushing the edges. And also we're on the edge of kind of the agricultural community pushing the edges of what it, what is possible, and also wanting to kind of wanting to retell the stories of ya know I think part of our spirituality is uncovering the stories that get covered up.
●		Sarah	Spirituality	58	58	And some of that is the story, I think for us it's the stories of farm workers, it's the stories of migration, it's the stories of ya know, stories of the land and the earth and relationships that have been harmed but then also the good stories.
●	practice	Sarah	God/scripture / spirituality	58	58	Our spirituality is very Eucharistic. I would say everyone has a strong connection to understanding the elements on the table, the bread, that the wheat and the water and the wine and the grapes, that the very elements of the earth are what feed us to be kind of the elements of the earth for others in that ya know not only do we share the image of God and our relationship with Christ is looking at the image of, but like, Christ was born of a women so Christ was born of water and of soil and shares the same element that we all share and that connection is eternal and that's also what we remember each week when we break bread. It reminds of that deep connection. We talk about water a lot, so our Eucharist service is water of life, bread of life... or water of life, word of life, bread of life. And the water of life is understanding our baptism as committing to a way and the power of baptism is being symbolized by water which is one of the ya know the greatest element of within the earth, but also water is a liquid; it's a, it can be oh ya know there's all these different phases water can go, it can be a solid, it changes, it is part of a life cycle, so kind of a lot of our spirituality and our theology is looking at how the elements that we experience every day are so connected to how we begin to see our Christian journey and our like journey of faith and gosh, it's probably something to think about



●		Sarah	Spirituality	72	72	Which is an indictment on our larger; it's an indictment on the country's how it values agriculture and the food it eats and then also our low cost of food, international trade agreements, and just corporate farming and that's what it's gonna become actually. And that's where I feel like the church has a role to play because 1. the church owns land across the country so if it's not in California, somewhere else there's land. The church can create some alternative economies. I feel like the church has role to play because what we do, we get up every morning to do the impossible and that's resurrection. It's the impossible thing that happened, that you never expected would happen but it happened, and so ya know every Sunday we believe in the resurrection and every day we should believe in the resurrection. So the role of the church is to say "We're gonna choose to do what doesn't make sense and what's gonna be impossible because that is, ya know, that's the narrative we have chosen to commit ourselves to" and so maybe it doesn't make sense for a secular or some other or even maybe another religious community to think that agriculture, small-scale agriculture, community-based agriculture is a good choice because it's maybe not a good choice in other terms but I feel like within the Christian church if we're committing to Christ in, kind of walking the way that Christ revealed in scripture, we're kind of committing to something that doesn't make any sense which is small-scale agriculture.
●	practice	Sarah	Spirituality	87	87	when we moved here, like they did, we did the first land blessing that ever happened here when we moved here. We're talking about doing a wedding. And I know Phil the landlord made a comment how neat it is to have these things happening. In some ways I feel like we are like a chaplain. Oh and we, we are definitely, we receive the benefit of being on the land, but what we bring is kind of a gift to the people who are here.
●		Alice	Earth/field/ land/ecosyste m\soil	5	5	There's a number of catholic worker farms in the Midwest. And Iowa has the most. I visited the southern Iowa one, and the one in Dubuque. And they're beautiful places. And their soil is just nowhere as awesome as ours here in central Iowa. 'cause we're on different glacial... we have different glacial histories.

●	Alice	Earth/field/land/ecosystem	20	20	<p>One thing I love about gardening is – I love being outside. I love working outside. And I love life. I love working with life. And I like taking care of life – I mean, I realize I do a lot of killing of things – as a gardener. But I... yeah, like food is cool, and eating is alright, and you know, like, I mean I like that the things that we're growing are food and that they're really good food and that they're this sort-of, like, gift of love to all these people – some of whom we know, and some of whom we'll never know. And they'll never know that we care about them – but it's like this packet of, like, ecosystem and life, and health, and you know – that's amazing. But I, you know, I'm not as – like, for me the work that I like better than... For a lot of people it's the harvest they really love, or it's the cooking and eating; and I like that that's all part of our life on the farm, but I like caring for the plants. I like taking care of that life. And I like trying to... it's this weird balance of trying to care for biology and ecosystem while struggling against it in this weird ... making these rows, and this control, and this neatness, and yet, like, trying not to destroy this wonderful web of soil. And trying to have this huge amount of biodiversity in the things we plant and in the things that we want to let be. But then, like, just feeling like, well we have rabbit habitat everywhere and – how do we keep the rabbits from eating everything and... I don't know.</p>
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●	Alice	Earth/field/land/ecosystem	38	42	<p>I think our farm is beautiful. And I think that this place we're in is beautiful. I mean, I think Iowa is beautiful and a lot of people don't think that, or don't notice that, I guess. I think it's harder to notice. Nate, while he says he's not from here, I feel like he's really an Iowa kinda guy. He just really loves the prairie, and I feel like his home is in the prairie. And...</p> <p>[sound of bag opening – KR says, sorry that's so loud.</p> <p>A: Right! You're gonna have to listen to it – [laughter]</p> <p>... And I feel like Iowa is beautiful at walking pace. Like, if you drive across Iowa, especially if go on I-80 all the way, it's like, probably your drive up here, probably you were like this is not that exciting. It's brown, with like, tiny green plants right now. I mean, Iowa has the smallest percentage of habitat of any of the states. So it has the least amount of wild-lands. Because our soil is so good. And not only is it good soil, it's easy to farm with tractors. It's pretty level, not very many rocks – there's definitely rocks out there, but so that's really sad, but also means that you can make a big difference. Planting five acres of prairie, like we've done, I mean, Nate has this idea, what is it? – He wants 50 percent of Iowa to be in prairie and 50 percent ... I don't think that's ever gonna happen. I don't know what's ever gonna happen, but he's like... a- definitely a larger percent of Iowa could be back in prairie and it would make a big difference. But, around here things are, yeah, it'd be nice to take you for a walk because – the landscape – we're on the Des Moines lobe which means that's the glacial – in the last glacial period, the glacier came down here and it kinda stopped at Des Moines. It's sort of this – we have map in the shed – there's a big, like, sort-of tongue that kinda goes across the top third of Iowa. And, anyway, that whole thing really just effected everybody's soil – so we have very new soil. So, very new ground up rocks, I guess. So, like, there's a lot of... the minerals that are necessary are available in the rocks of our soil. They're not necessarily available to the plants, but they are easily accessible if you have the right biology. And then, we had this, like, long long long time of prairie and marsh. So, also the biological – the carbon – parts of our . . . I guess we have really deep topsoil because, I guess, we had this prairie with these really deep roots and we had these marshes, you know, just standing... Anyway, we have good minerals and good organic matter. So we have some of the best soils in the world, here – in central Iowa.</p> <p>Our farm has... So, the land that we rented for that year and then the three acres even that we rented as we expanded has extremely, extremely good soil. The eleven acres that we purchased has extremely varied soil. So, I don't know if you know - the "corn suitability rating" – so, I think it's on a scale of, like, zero to a hundred, and we have – the soils on our farm vary from, like, 90 to 22, I think.</p>
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●		Alice	Earth/field/land/ecosystem\soil	41	42	<p>I mean, Iowa has the smallest percentage of habitat of any of the states. So it has the least amount of wild-lands. Because our soil is so good. And not only is it good soil, it's easy to farm with tractors. It's pretty level, not very many rocks – there's definitely rocks out there, but so that's really sad, but also means that you can make a big difference. Planting five acres of prairie, like we've done, I mean, Nate has this idea, what is it? – He wants 50 percent of Iowa to be in prairie and 50 percent ... I don't think that's ever gonna happen. I don't know what's ever gonna happen, but he's like... a- definitely a larger percent of Iowa could be back in prairie and it would make a big difference. But, around here things are, yeah, it'd be nice to take you for a walk because – the landscape – we're on the Des Moines lobe which means that's the glacial – in the last glacial period, the glacier came down here and it kinda stopped at Des Moines. It's sort of this – we have map in the shed – there's a big, like, sort-of tongue that kinda goes across the top third of Iowa. And, anyway, that whole thing really just effected everybody's soil – so we have very new soil. So, very new ground up rocks, I guess. So, like, there's a lot of... the minerals that are necessary are available in the rocks of our soil. They're not necessarily available to the plants, but they are easily accessible if you have the right biology. And then, we had this, like, long long long time of prairie and marsh. So, also the biological – the carbon – parts of our . . . I guess we have really deep topsoil because, I guess, we had this prairie with these really deep roots and we had these marshes, you know, just standing... Anyway, we have good minerals and good organic matter. So we have some of the best soils in the world, here – in central Iowa.</p> <p>Our farm has... So, the land that we rented for that year and then the three acres even that we rented as we expanded has extremely, extremely good soil. The eleven acres that we purchased has extremely varied soil. So, I don't know if you know - the “corn suitability rating” – so, I think it's on a scale of, like, zero to a hundred, and we have – the soils on our farm vary from, like, 90 to 22, I think.</p>
●	Photo goes with this	Alice	Earth/field/land/ecosystem\soil	44	44	<p>Yeah, so we have really good soils and we have really poor soils. Again, if we walk around, [SEE PHOTO OF TRENCH] you'll be able to see it. So, down that way, which is all the – the poor soils have been planted to prairie. 'Cause the prairie can handle it. Also they're also more steep, so it'll be good for those places to have those deep roots. And, yeah, so really gravely, clay-y, with no topsoil kind-of places downhill over there. And then, kind of at the center of the farm, where most of the vegetable production is, is some of the best soil. And partly 'cause that's how it's been and partly because there were a bunch of animals, I think, also living and pooping, also in that central area.</p>

●	Alice	Earth/field/ land/ ecosystem	58	58	And it is a beautiful place. It is, it's kind-of, and I shouldn't talk about Iowa in this way, it's kind of like when you go down there, it's like you're in Wyoming, or someplace else. Which is not fair to Iowa, it's like, "it's so beautiful I'm in a different state!" [laughter] But it's really, I mean, it is a really beautiful stretch of – so there's the Squaw River Valley - which is a terrible name for a creek or a river – but yeah, so there's just like a 40-foot drop, and there's, like, lots of – we also have more rocks than most places – I walked the river to town – it took me, like, eight hours, but it was really fun to see all the land that the river goes through. Up here, so, up here we have a lot more people raising cattle, we have a lot more hills, and rocks than they do. Even like, a couple miles that way, and then when you walk the river, maybe five miles south, suddenly it turns into more sandy and... So there was, I think there was a moraine that was a big push and pull back and then push again of the glacier. So anyway, I also like that, that there's more wild land, and there's more grazing land than you have in many of our neighboring townships, or... Anyway, even close by people are farming more fencerow to fencerow than they are right here. So I love that place as a place to go and walk and to... be alone, and yeah. Sometimes look for mushrooms, though I'm not supposed to look for mushrooms.
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●	Alice	Earth/field/land/ecosystem	64	68	<p>But it's a beautiful place over there. And our place has become more and more beautiful the longer we've been allowed to stay, and the more we've planted. Yeah. Our place is so beautiful, I think. And I think it's gonna become more and more so as we are able to build our infrastructure and as our, as the prairie – you know, the prairie is gonna be so beautiful. And, yeah, I don't know. I mean, it's an interesting time, I guess. 'Cause I feel like we're at the, sort-of, this beginning of this farm and it has its whole life ahead of it. But the beginning of this terrible, like, climate, like, apocalypse. And we're trying to plant habitat for, like, these struggling species. And we're seeing things come, you know, but it's like, maybe these things are not going to be with us very long. I don't know. It's a really confusing, heartbreaking time. And again, it's like – why farm? Like, our weather's supposed to get more and more volatile. And it's just, like, gonna be so... It's, like, stressful to deal with the weather as so directly all the time. And to have everything dependent on the weather? Why would you want to be a farmer in the midst of climate change? And I'm like, "why would you want to be anything in the midst of climate change?" Our whole life is going to be precarious. Why not be in it with your eyes open? Right in the middle of it. At least I won't be able to pretend. And, like, well, we can't keep farming the way we are in the midst of climate change. We need people to be doing creative things with water. And we need plants on the soil. We need... yeah, we just, anyway... our farming's not going to be okay if we don't have, like, smart water management. I just feel like soil health is gonna, like ... I don't know, there's no way we're going to have a food system if we don't have soil health, and yeah, like, yeah fertilizer and irrigation. It's just like – I don't know. One, I just don't think they're going to be able to handle it. Like, I feel like, we are able to get by with soil – with irrigation and fertilizers because, like, well because we have tons of fossil fuels to use. And because here we have a really, like, lenient climate. But we're not going to be able to afford – I don't know. I don't know. Maybe financially we will be able to keep having cheap fossil fuels, like, forever.</p> <p>KR: ... we'll run out eventually (aside)</p> <p>A: like, I don't know. I just feel like – I wish we would run out really soon, so we'd have a better... I just feel like, I don't know, it's gotta ... I don't know. It's gonna destroy us from one side or the other and I just feel like we need to have some alternatives.</p> <p>KR: mmmhmm – and you are that.</p> <p>A: I know, that's what we're trying to do! But I feel like this also might destroy us one way or the other so...[laughter] I don't know if that's necessarily the model, like, "You too can grow food without fossil fuels... and irrigation... but you might go crazy." [laughter]</p>
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●	Alice	Earth/field/land/ecosystem\soil	64	64	We need people to be doing creative things with water. And we need plants on the soil. We need... yeah, we just, anyway... our farming's not going to be okay if we don't have, like, smart water management. I just feel like soil health is gonna, like ... I don't know, there's no way we're going to have a food system if we don't have soil health, and yeah, like, yeah fertilizer and irrigation. It's just like – I don't know. One, I just don't think they're going to be able to handle it. Like, I feel like, we are able to get by with soil – with irrigation and fertilizers because, like, well because we have tons of fossil fuels to use. And because here we have a really, like, lenient climate. But we're not going to be able to afford – I don't know. I don't know. Maybe financially we will be able to keep having cheap fossil fuels, like, forever.
●	Alice	Earth/field/land/ecosystem	73	73	I do think it would be good for our farms' sustainability to have animals. It's interesting. So, we have a lot of deer. A lot of rabbits. And we a lot of – we have bees. We've always had bees on the farm. We have been participating in pollinator projects for the past three years. And we're gonna do another one this year. Each year is a different project. And, it'd be nice if they were the same people working with us, but it's... Every year it's a different project. But I think we really care about what - just the whole ecosystem. So, all the native – you know just everything – I don't know, like, the – you know I guess I'm not a big fan of squash bugs and cucumber beetles. But I am a big fan of a healthy ecosystem where the population of those are still there but not, like - I don't need to wipe out cucumber beetles and squash bugs. I just want them to not eat all of my plants.

●	Alice	Earth/field/land/ecosystem	76	78	<p>We just put in a pond last year which is pretty exciting on a lot of fronts. So, we did this big like, we put in this pond, and we're trying to do this savanna habitat restoration. savanna, like, modeling kind of eco-like agro-forestry kind of thing. So it's sort-of like, we're planting things – a lot of native edible trees, or, like, native crosses with more improved strains. So, like, we've planted some pawpaws, and persimmons, and chestnuts, and hickory, and like some white oak, and some smaller shrub – some edible and some just ... yeah, so just kind-of a mix of – So, like, right here, a lot of this was savanna. You know, it was an oak savanna. So the big ecosystems in Iowa are the wetlands, the prairie, and the oak savanna. And, you can see, we still have a number of really old oaks in the area. So, right here – this was an oak savanna and prairie – probably. So, trying to kind-of do a little bit of restoration of that, but also having a productive food system that is like the savanna, kinda filling that same niche is what we're trying to do. But, anyway, and the pond – a big part of the pond – was this nutrient reduction. So, the water – so, we're capturing water from about 10 acres that are going into that pond and the hope is... Well, and a lot of... a fair amount of that 10 acres is our land now, so it's pretty well-managed and it's already pretty clean water going in there. But some of it's coming from conventional farm tile-lines...</p> <p>KR: I was going to ask... yeah...</p> <p>A: So, our goal is to help that water get cleaner before it leaves our farm. So, it's gonna go right into the river, like, pretty – 50 yards across the road – so yeah, our goal is to make sure that all the water that leaves our farm is cleaner than when it got here. But it also has other benefits that we stocked it with fish, and we can hopefully go swimming. And, I'm hoping that there are sometimes when it's clean enough. But – Nate's been testing it and it's been pretty good – so and then also just, like, a back up of water source for irrigation, if we need an emergency back-up – which I hope we never need, but...</p>
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●	Alice	Earth/field/ land/ ecosystem	80	82	<p>Right, so the deer fence helps a lot. So we fence certain sections – like the low chicken wire. So, there's a section down there – like all the Brassicas – well, there's a little fenced in section up there. So there are things that are in really high demand or rabbits – so, we'll fence them when they're young. And as they get bigger the... yeah, and the rabbits have been getting worse – because we're here. Like, the rabbits have been terrible in town because there's so many people. I mean, the rabbits are safe because they don't have predators. When we first lived here, no one had lived here for a couple years. So, the coyotes were running right through so the rabbit population was pretty low. So, hopefully... our cat is good at catching babies – bunnies – and eating them. I don't know. I mean, we do need to start hunting, I think, but again, like... Nate's dad is a super big hunter, but Nate, I don't know. I mean, I don't have any practice hunting. So, I'd have to learn how to kill things and butcher them. It's not like, the most exciting... [laughter]</p> <p>KR: But, you'd be okay doing it?</p> <p>A: I'm not morally opposed.</p>
●	Louise2	Earth/field/ land/ ecosystem\ soil	4	4	<p>We became aware of the native species and that had been growing here before people came, and we decided that we would really like to try and establish the historical ecosystem of the native plants to attract the native birds and provide habitat for them. And that's become our biggest job on the farm. We continue to maintain the coffee and to harvest it commercially, but the native trees are really our biggest project on this land. And trying to improve the soil because this area had been used for agriculture for a long period of time. We learned from our neighbors who grew up here that the farm had been bulldozed at least twice. So, we knew that soil enrichment would be really important.</p>
●	Louise2	Earth/field/ land/ ecosystem	4	4	<p>And I think I've talked to you about how we really don't feel like we own this land, it's just, we're just... it's a gift to us; it's on loan and we try to treat it that way. That we would try to steward this land so that, if anything, we could improve it, and take good care of it. And that's it's really just on loan from God. We're very grateful that we get to live here. We say prayers of thanks for that every day.</p>
●	Louise2	Earth/field/ land/ ecosystem	6	6	<p>And it's such a mystery because we know that it has been used historically. It was probably ranch land. So, very likely taro (kalo) would have been grown here as well as breadfruit (ulu). Probably, cattle has been grazed here. but we really don't know.</p>

●	Louise2	Earth/field/ land/ ecosystem	14	14	Oh, I just love this land. And I love the birds. I actually really like the coffee trees. They're pretty gentle. And they're so willing to hang in there. And that's what I find about everything that grows here. The bananas were here before we came too. So we didn't plant the bananas. We didn't plant the lemon trees. The avocados trees just volunteered. So it's like you feel like creation is giving to you.
●	Louise2	Earth/field/land/ ecosystem\soil	15	15	To plant an orchard crop is better to plant a crop that you plow. For this kind of soil. So, the coffee does that pretty well to produce organic matter to make the soil richer. So, it's its own little ground factory.
●	Louise2	Earth/field/ land/ ecosystem	15	15	And then the native trees, we became aware of them because, when we first came to look at the farm, and we had that coffee expert come down, he said, "You know that tree, that's a Mamaki, that's a native Hawaiian tree." I had no knowledge of what a native Hawaiian tree was. And the Ohias that are on the farm, the hundreds of year old trees. I mean, it's hard not to have respect for something that is so old, and is the first tree that comes in on a lava field. And, so we really just fell in love with the native trees. Then after Bob cleared the north property line of Christmas Berry which was an invasive species that man had brought here to try to break up the lava rocks. and it just took over every place and prevents things from growing underneath it. And Bob took it upon himself to clear that all away and we found three (3) Kapiko trees. That, it was like, well, I've never seen anything like that before. And it was through that process of just those... And the other thing is the Moa fern, and I haven't shown that to you. It grows around the base of the coffee trees. And it's a primitive fern.
●	Louise2	Earth/field/ land/ ecosystem	18	18	And so we started investigating it. And NRCS was certainly a help. – I have to show you those books, the ones I talked about – and, um, we just kind of, I don't know, it was kind of like, we were convinced that that, just in our own hearts, that that's what we ought to be doing. we wanted more of the native plants to survive. To provide a habitat for the plants themselves. And we knew they needed help. That the other things that had been planted were -preventing them from reseeding themselves and from thriving. So, then we found the nurseries that grew them, and that was through NRCS. And we took a forest stewards class. And learned about how the Hawaiians had used the land, and started learning the Hawaiian names of the native plants. And it just, it just seemed like it was the right thing for us to do. And so we're trying to add as many different native plants as possible to make the bird habitat and provide bird food. And um, and we can, our love of that is like – and you keep hearing me say, "our", 'cause Bob is really in this together (laughter). And we both have the same goal. And so just to take care of the soil and take care of the natives - provide a place for those plants.
●	Louise2	Earth/field/ land/ecosystem\soil	18	18	And so just to take care of the soil and take care of the natives - provide a place for those plants.

●	Louise2	Earth/field/ land/ ecosystem\ soil	37	39	<p>And the NRCS has been really advocating no pesticides – no herbicides - and no pulling. It's like, cut don't pull.</p> <p>KR: Oh, interesting.</p> <p>L: Because the cutting provides more organic matter to go in the soil, even though you might have seed in that; it's better for the soil to do that than it is to pull the stuff out. Because then you're pulling all the moisture out. It's really, it's interesting.</p>
●	Louise2	Earth/field/ land/ ecosystem	64	64	<p>This is one of my special lands. I am open to all, to all lands. To be present there. But this is certainly my home. Right now. And yeah, and I'm still learning it. In Sand County Almanac he talks about, and in Pilgrim at Tinker Creek same thing – they talk about slowing down enough to see the bugs, see how the water runs. You talked today about the clouds moving faster than the water and watching the clouds - just watching the clouds. Oh Bob will tell you how I just sit here and watch the clouds just march down the coast. And, I was sitting here last night and you know I was saying, "Oh, they're not low enough yet..." And so it's important to me to be able to be a "weather witch". To learn where I think the water is under the ground. To learn what the sky looks like, what weather does that portend? So it's that whole ecosystem. It's the whole thing. To slow down enough in my humanness to realize that there is something bigger going on here and I'm just a really small part of it. And it really is my, I feel like, my job, to watch, and to become in tune with it - so that you can live in harmony with it. I mean that to me is such a gift. I mean, I spent years at a desk in front of a computer, helping people. That's great too, but this is what feeds my soul. The people do too. They really do. They really matter to me. But, for me – you spoke about how you wrote a book about how to not just take care of everybody else, but to take care of yourself. This is what takes care of me. To be nurtured by nature really takes care of me.</p>

●		Louise2	Earth/field/ land/ ecosystem\ soil	72	72	The other thing is the Earth Worms. Oh my gosh! When we first bought this land and we started planting things. We were like, “Look!” Every time we turn a rock over and find an earth worm, it was like so exciting, it was like, “we really do have soil! There really are worms here. It’s so exciting.” And it’s like, these two grown people being so excited about worms! (laughter) It’s like, yeah, that’s like, really cool. And yeah, there are big centipedes too, up there, but they don’t bother me. It’s like, okay, you guys are part of it too. Yeah, I’m sure you’re munching stuff up and excreting stuff out. And you know, it’s like, it’s just all part of it. So, the mongoose are the hardest thing. Feral cats are also a big problem. In terms of the birds and the geckos. Because they are such good hunters. And people tend to keep cats to keep the mice down. That’s a conflict thing for me. It’s hard. I just let ‘em be. Bob’s more aggressive. I just, you know, if he sees one, he’ll go out and yell at it. That’s the least of what he’ll do, but he doesn’t like cats. So, that’s his thing.
●		Louise2	Earth/field/lan d/ecosystem	73	73	The Kapiko trees are called the “praying hands tree” because that’s the way their leaves come up. And then they spread out. So that’s their nickname.
●		Louise2	Earth/field/ land/ ecosystem	216	216	I hope that by the time I die there will be little enough coffee and more food crops. That when my kids come – in terms of tree crop – that my... that this will be an oasis for the birds and the bugs and the bats. And that my kids won’t have to feel that there’s a huge amount of labor for them to do. And that they do keep it protected. You know, and will protect it for as long as we can. And try to be good stewards of it. That’s what I want for this land. I would just love to see more and more native plantings and so... a gentle use of the land that helps the other creatures and the land itself. That would be my hope. And, you know, I don’t expect that they will become coffee farmers. I totally don’t expect that. Ha ha. But they can rent it out to Ramon if they want. (laughter) He’d be happy with that. So... and that my farm workers would come to understand about the native species. And I realize that’s a... it’s an economic lesson. It has a broader vision.
●		Amber2	Earth/field/lan d/ecosystem	32	32	But the land, I probably am more of the, um, considering the stewardship, greeting the wildflowers, watching leaves, so I don’t have as much of the technical. I have more of the...
●		Amber2	Earth/field/ land/ecosyste m	34	34	the enjoyment of it. Crunching leaves under my feet in the fall. Um, you know going out in a snowfall when it’s like a lavender night and everything is falling, there’s like a hush and there’s a sparkle in the snow. You know just having the space to see that. We talked about sunrises, sunsets.
●	[see notes about the forest walk we took].	Amber2	Earth/field/lan d/ecosystem	36	36	We talked about the constellation and the moon and because I go out everyday I can watch, I can watch all of that. And it’s not even huge moments of contemplation, but it’s just looking at them and acknowledging that they’re there and they’re moving. We talked about clouds moving through the sky, water moving past

●	Amber2	Earth/field/ land/ ecosystem	36	36	And yeah, so I think for it's being, it's being grounded here. I like to watch out my window you know the trees. Like now it's nice because I see the birds in the branches, but it's nice when the leaves come too. You know you watch them move and change. So I think for me it's more on that and I don't have to be thinking as much about planting and, and you know all the work that goes, but there's others in my family who love that.
●	Amber2	Earth/field/ land/ ecosystem	48	50	<p>And that really your faith is to be worked out...</p> <p>K: On the land.</p> <p>A: towards your relationship with the land. That's a not, that's not a creation-worshipping-panteistic sort-of view, it just means the reality is you live within the created order that God put in place, yes, it's fallen, certainly, but God didn't take you out of the world. He said, "You'll, you'll have thorns and you'll fight and you'll return to the dust," and I think they just gave me permission to start really looking at it. Because the, the modern world isn't looking at it. And that's a little critical and we could parse that – you know what I mean? We could make that a little more generous I think in the statement, but in general, most of my friends are not considering you know creation, fall, and redemption in this setting right on the farm, like I am.</p>
●	Amber2	Earth/field/ land/ ecosystem	54	54	I think the dairy farm has it's own demands so you don't have much energy left at the end of the day, but I still think it's, it's like I respect what you're doing with your homestead, respect that entering into that. Making the world fruitful around you. I think that's my word right now is just living a fruitful life and the land definitely has a part in it. I think I'm more concerned about overall like our relationship towards God and each other, making sure that's fruitful, but it's not at odds, it's all together.
●	Amber2	Earth/field/ land/ ecosystem	70	70	Some of my friend, some of my friends husbands, they would come out with their small children during the week and you know this was just wonderful for the kids. They just love it and then once in a while their husbands would come out and you'd see a real *takes a deep long sigh* and they're looking around and just the land and the space so I think you know we have some, one of Gracie's friends now likes to come and milk and she wants to do cows and horses someday and why her specifically, I don't know, but you just leave the door open and encourage her.
●	Amber2	Earth/field/ land/ ecosystem	70	70	I take some of friends out on wild flower walks.

●	Jeannette2	Earth/field/ land/ ecosystem\ soil	77	77	Were just 5 acres and we're in the middle of a very like, urban environment. So, everything is really intensive. There's not a lot of time to let the soil rest in a cover crop or rejuvenate the soil in that way. Our neighbors don't do anything like that because it's so go go go. Apply fertilizer, put the rows in, and then grow, harvest, till it, and the whole process starts again. So I think our challenge is being an intensive production on such small portion of land whilst trying to care for the soil and try to stay away from using synthetic fertilizers and things like that. So our plan right now, ideally, is to start with an application of compost and then we grow something really heavy on it like tomatoes or carrots or watermelon. Something that sucks up a lot of nutrients from the soil. And then we follow that with a planting of something really like spinach, lettuce, quick and easy and after that ideally we plant a legume of some kind to put a little bit of nitrogen back in the soil and after that, that chunk would have some time to rest and possibly put it under a cover crop and let it rest and then the whole process starts again. So it's like a four-step process. Does that ever happen in real life? Not so much (laughs) But that's the goal.
●	Jeannette2	Earth/field/ land/ ecosystem\ soil	83	83	Exactly. For us, Um, I think we're at the beginning stages of that. It's kind of like we're acquaintances with the soil instead of farming that deep, like that Wendell Berry relationship you read about all the time. Um, so mainly it's just like trying to plug in little things here and there into our very intensive system to treat the soil better than otherwise. We're not really able to do no-till or, or a lot of cover cropping or letting it lay fallow because it's always moving and we're always transitioning from one space to another. So I think for us I think it means, like, trying to till a row less than necess... than would be optimal for new growth or um, even like, maintaining, letting a row of lettuce we haven't used go to flower so it puts out pollinator... so just like trying to put little allowances for native pollinators, for soil health, for things like that, into our very structured system.
●	Jeannette2	Earth/field/ land/ ecosystem	87	87	Here we moved and there are weeds everywhere and tons of birds, lots of bugs... lots of bugs... and um, and when it rains it only takes one day for the soil to dry out enough for us to walk on where over in Santa Paula it would be, ya know, sticky for a week or so.
●	Jeannette2	Earth/field/ land/ ecosystem\ soil	89	89	here it's more silty/loamy which is more prime

●	Jeannette2	Earth/field/ land/ ecosystem	89	89	actually the Oxnard plain is the technical name and how it was formed was, um, Like a long ... I don't know how many years ago, but a lot of years in the past this all used to be an ocean and those mountains right there slowly as years went past all the rivers would flow into the ocean. So when the ocean retreated then all these nutrients were left on this flat surface you can see. So the soil is absolutely prime which is why land prices are so high which is why strawberries are grown here because it is a very thirsty crop. So that is why we, that is where our land problems come from is we're trying to grow vegetables in a, ya know, growing vegetables in a Beverly Hills and try to buy a piece of land in Beverly Hills – it's just not too easy.
●	Jeannette2	Earth/field/ land/ ecosystem	93	93	The birds, yeah, it's a trade off because we gain so much joy from getting to see that like what farming used to look I guess in our move here to Camarillo, but it's a small price to pay to slingshot them every one in a while (laughter). Um, and as far as incorporating integrated pest management on to our farm as much as possible so we don't have to use organic pesticides unless it reaches a certain peak level. So, trying to plant a row of herbs every 10 rows so that the strong smell dissuades pests from coming to the plants. Things like that. Keeping the soil healthy but we still have to use organic pesticides, ya know, that's just part of the game.
●	Jeannette2	Earth/field/ land/ ecosystem	119	119	But it was really difficult for me to see God in Los Angeles and Evergreen with its beautiful landscape was kind of the first place that I was like, Of course! Yes, here She is like right here staring at you through the trees and on the tangle of green on the side of the road. She's everywhere, He's everywhere and um, so I think this work here is important in my own spirituality because it's all about slowing down and ...and learning about the infinite other lives and ecosystems that exist underneath the soil and in the air and around us and um, seeing like that interconnected web of life that exists on this farm and if you tug on one little part of it, over there something will fall over and we are never going to be able to see all these little strings that tie everything together. But they are stories for us to try to unravel to find out more about God and the world that we live in... Yeah.
●	Reyna	Earth/field/ land/ ecosystem	7	7	So then I started feeling very satisfied with where I was working, I really appreciated it. I was really satisfied that I wasn't just recycling or just remembering to turn off my facet, but was actually taking care of the earth, taking care of the land. It was very satisfying to be earning the money I needed to be earning and doing this work at the same time. At first I was really excited to realize I was working on an organic farm and ya know taking care of the land and was really helped with just that information.

●	Reyna	Earth/field/land/ecosystem	7	7	But that started even reaching deeper layers. A lot more into God and faith side, started learning or awakening that. I was realizing, “Hey I’m not even smoking marijuana and all of a sudden I’m on the same page as everybody and all of a sudden I’m connecting.” (all laugh) To see how like similar we are to the plants, realizing how similar we are to the plants. So it’s been really satisfying and amazing to see how even in deep composition and compost, you end up with this even more nutrient rich earth. And it’s very similar to the people. Because ya know it’s very similar to people in that after having a difficult life, not being victim, but having a difficult life, I am making the comparison that earth, sometimes you may even think you are living a shitty life, excuse the language, ya know through kind of like all that death, you can be reborn in a very fertile place. How the farm really needs the energy of someone to take care of it. I realized too that the earth needs someone to take care, maybe I need someone to take care of her, not necessarily another person, but like God. And ya know a force a much bigger force.
●	Reyna	Earth/field/land/ecosystem	18	18	It’s very different from a lot of farm managers because actually we have to do everything (laughter). When we plan a harvesting week, it’s me really doing everything from harvesting to washing to transporting. Once a week we do a walkthrough the fields to know what products are gonna be available for the CSA boxes that week and the schools that we wholesale to. So every three weeks, we dedicate a day to seeding, planting, so that we always have a continual supply of crops.
●	Reyna	Earth/field/land/ecosystem	24	24	That’s a good question because now I feel I am just as crazy as everyone else. I can’t really explain but we’re created from the earth. So if you believe it or not, for me there is a really big connection. There’s a phrase in Spanish that says, it’s the earth that works. When I’m in the farm I feel free. For years I worked in fields but I didn’t have that connection of seeing the creation. Because before, perhaps, my idea of God is that he’s in the heavens, he’s in the sky, but on the farm, you can see the cycles of life. And not only about just the seeds, so it can be you’re not even working in a farm, that your hands aren’t in the earth, but this pattern of planting and harvesting – it’s in your life. You are always going to harvest what you’ve been planting. So if you’re planting destruction, you’re going to harvest destruction. So if you want to create or recreate your life your going to have a resurrection. So that’s really how I see this God, this God of second chances that he will always be there to receive you. So it’s like I was saying with that one little piece of earth that I had planted twice ya know, once it didn’t work, another time it didn’t and the third time it did. So maybe the first time it wasn’t working because I wasn’t putting my heart into it. And then when I did put my heart into it, it did work and it’s the same with life.



●	Sarah	Earth/field/ land/ ecosystem	11	11	And then their transformation leads to transformation of other things and I think we'd also talk about ya know for us in the Abundant Table and our work specifically, ya know, the earth, and the land and the plants and the growing is a major components and participant in that transformation as well and that the earth too is experiencing that transformation as we're in relationship as well. Kind of like a, like a, ya know it's also a character in the journey.
●	Sarah	Earth/field/lan d/ecosystem	27	27	I am currently in the field once or twice a week. That is newer...I was... that's a newer thing that is happening because I was realizing how much I missed it
●	Sarah	Earth/field/ land/ ecosystem	34	34	Um, this farm was hard to move to. The farm we were at last year was beautiful like near the mountains surround... there's just a gorgeous, it's just a beautiful space. You couldn't hear the freeway. It was just aesthetically beautiful and we had spent so much time getting to know that soil and so the move here was, has been hard because it's loud; it feels industrial around us. We love, um, being on a farm where we know our landlord is supportive of what we are doing. So I would say being out here, being in the field there are moments when you can feel disconnected from the noise.
●	Sarah	Earth/field/lan d/ecosystem	34	34	But kind of tangibly the stinging nettles always wonderful reminder things that are so good to you, or so good for you that hurt so bad.
●	Sarah	Earth/field/ land/ ecosystem\ soil	34	34	Getting to know our soil whenever we move is hard for us and the bugs, getting to know the bugs is hard and the weather patterns. So a lot of what we do is a lot of getting to have a relationship with the land that we are farming on because if not, it will not produce and then we will not be able to pay anyone.
●	Sarah	Earth/field/lan d/ecosystem	58	58	And some of that is the story, I think for us it's the stories of farm workers, it's the stories of migration, it's the stories of ya know, stories of the land and the earth and relationships that have been harmed but then also the good stories.
●	Sarah	Earth/field/ land/ ecosystem	66	66	I would actually say even some of what we were talking about earlier with Phil, specifically here we are on some of the best, richest soil in the country and some of the highest land rent prices because what can grow here are strawberries and berries and we our county basically grows the majority of the strawberries and berries for around the world along with Watsonville and part of Mexico. It's this coastal climate and what has happened it that because strawberries can be sold at such a high premium that means that strawberries growers can pay more and more rent. Which means when we first started farming here organic land at market rate was about \$300,000 per acre per year which is high across the county. Now 6-7 years later it's almost \$5,000 per acre per year which is, for example if this helps in Bakersfield you're looking at \$600 per acre per year.

●	Sarah	Earth/field/ land/ ecosystem	87	87	Like the other workers who are here that see a different way of how we do things and also just inspiring folks who are in sustainable agriculture to not just see it as production but like to really see a different side and so I think, I think we've been a gift to every place we've gone.
●	Sarah	Earth/field/ land/ ecosystem	93	93	model and live out an ethic of growing sustainability that reflects a diverse ecosystem. So a diverse ecosystem needs ya know multiple, um, ya know we could do maybe, it needs to be able to rotate, crops need to rotate, land needs to lie fallow, um and I would just also say business wise, diversity in vegetables and products makes a difference. For us as a small farm within our community, we wouldn't be able to survive financially if we just grew one thing the size we were and so it just makes sense on two levels but it also, and there's something how it it's inspiring and kind of and with the education for kids to see how you can grow all of these different things and experience what that looks like. There's something inspiring and I think transformative about that too.
●	Sarah	Earth/field/ land/ ecosystem	129	129	I think it's something that is hopeful, um, I think it's also something that when they come and experience and visit, they experience community in a way they rarely ever do in their own church community and I think they experience a connection to creation in a way that they never experience and I just think you can't help but feel excited and inspired and I think a lot of folks feel and many people are gardeners and they love to talk about their gardens which happens a lot (laughter) and I mean maybe even on their windowsill but like people love that and I think that makes them love us which is kind of funny.
●	Alice	Practices	4	4	I'm not a catholic worker, I'm not in a catholic worker community." But I had been trying to actually live by my Catholic worker ideals all the time. Between, you know, trying to live a life of voluntary simplicity, and social justice, and spirituality and... all these things.
●	Alice	Practices	16	16	And almost every year we've been able to cover the farm's expenses with the CSA member shares that we sell. And that is approximately 1/3 of the food we grow - we sell to the CSA and the other 2/3 we give away - through people who are doing work-shares or directly to families who we know, or through the food pantries and the soup kitchens and the shelters.

●	Alice	work	18	18	My mom always – when I was little we had a garden. In Milwaukee – and you know we grew like some sugar snap peas and cherry tomatoes – you know some things that are like, great for kids to eat. I think, I guess I watched my mom, like, her whole life try to have a garden in cities. And like, really struggle to be able to grow things – like and have – you know plant things and have them be mowed down by landlords or the city. And I guess, like, it’s interesting when I think about raising kids – which maybe I won’t – so, maybe I don’t need to worry about this but... like, a lot of people talk about growing up on farms, or growing up with it, like, being this really terrible chore. And I, you know, I grew up the opposite. I grew up with someone who loved to garden, longing to garden, like, struggling. And it was sort-of this privilege – like, aren’t you lucky if you’re able to have a garden. You know, and like watching my mom have this like heartbreak after heartbreak of like trying to have a garden and just destroyed. Or like, trying to plant flowers on, like, the space between the alley gravel and the cemetery wall and they’re all dying because it’s terrible soil. So then she, like, goes and looks for, like, beautiful weeds along that space between the gravel and the cemetery wall and digs them up and brings them back to behind our apartment.
●	Alice	work	21	21	I like being a farmer. For me, my faith definitely has some ebbs and flows – but I definitely feel like I’ve been just through a period of, like, what am I doing? And this was, like, because this farm has been, like, this farm is such a huge deal. I just think about my last nine years of my life have just flown by. And I’ve dedicated so much of my life to this vision and this work. And I’m like, well, what is it doing? Is it doing any good? We’re, like, financially, we’re kind of a wreck on every front – I mean, myself, and Nate, and the farm and, like, our buildings are falling down. And like, you know, maybe it’s ruining my marriage, and I am not having any children... and maybe I’ve sacrificed all these things that I should have been doing in my 30’s. You know, and here, I just turned 40 – that’s why I’m having this big crisis – I just turned 40 in February!

●	Alice	work Stewardship	21	22	<p>Before I felt, like, really clear. I feel like, this is my calling. Not like, “God told me to do this.” But it feels really right. It feels really, like, this is – you know I couldn’t... maybe this confidence in my faith and that I’m trying to take right actions in the world; I’m trying to be, you know, as good as I can be – again not in that in that sort-of like, “I want to be good and holy...” but I just... I do. I want to be good and holy. I don’t want to be thought of as good and holy. I just want to be good and holy. Like, and there are many ways to do that, and this feels right for me. This feels like the best way that I can try to live by my values and be of use to the world. Yeah, and I feel like I’ve felt a lot of clarity in that – for a long time. I don’t know... I’m definitely in a place where I don’t know if I can handle... like, the work’s not getting easier. And maybe it’s... I don’t know. I forgot why I was talking about that – why was I talking about that?</p> <p>Oh! “Why did I want to be a farmer?” I was trying to say - well, I feel like it was the right thing for me. I feel like, both, in like, mission and in work. That it feels really right. Except when I get depressed and feel like there’s... I should have been doing something... easier.</p>
●	Alice	Practices	25	25	<p>sort-of this, I guess, this distributivist economics – so really small-scale, personal ownership, or private-ownership – they believe, it’s pretty much the same thing that the Catholic church teaches in all of it’s social teaching. It’s like, you know, they’re not against private property, but they’re not Capitalists; but they’re not Communists, they’re not Capitalists – we believe in private property – but, like, the point of work, and the point of production is usefulness and the greater good. And that people should have ownership in their means of production, and you know, just this model of smaller-scale crafts and food-growing that is all about service to the neighbor and to the community, and beauty and helpfulness and not about greed and competition.</p>

●	Alice	Practices	32	32	<p>we have struggled with spiritual practice - which is maybe why you're asking this question – I don't know - but we have really struggled with any kind of consistent spiritual practice on our farm. Which makes me sad, but which doesn't make other people sad. So, yeah, we are like this spiritually-based farm that is super open and wants people of all faiths, or of none, to be welcome and included here, and I would like to – within that framework – to still have some spiritual practice. And it is hard to, um, find something that everybody loves. And it's also hard to initiate things when people have quite different practices. A lot of people, I think, more and more in the world, or in the United States, just are uncomfortable with spirituality or, definitely religion. And so, yeah, would like to just avoid it altogether or are instantly... associate any spiritual conversation with some sort-of negative, like, proselytizing experience they've had. So, that's a really hard culture to navigate for me. So, the one thing that we've found to be universally un-offensive – is a practice that I love – which is, well you kind-of saw a shorter version of it with our 'Roses, Buds, and Thorns' today at the end of our harvest – but we do our consolations and desolations – usually at lunchtime – and that's every day, with whoever is here for lunch... but we didn't do it today. And, yeah, actually, I got that practice from Gary. He's really into, sort-of the Ignatian examen, and it's like the super short and easy examen exercise. And what I like about it is it's an opportunity for people to become closer to each other and it's an opportunity to self-reflect about what it is that gives me joy, and what it is that's hard for me. And I like that exercise as an exercise for myself or for a person as like, but it's not so... it's like a slow and patient spiritual exercise, I guess, in that, like - let's just notice everyday – or, for me, let's just see if I can notice – all the time – in theory – right? What is giving me joy? And what is painning me? And to listen to that. And if it gives me joy – is it a real joy? Or is it just a momentary satisfaction? And if it is a pain – is it a real, like, heart-soreness? is it bitter-sweet? Or is it, you know, am I ... Did I just not get what I wanted, or am I really sad? Is it sad for the world? And what does that mean? And, how can I use that information to change how I live in the world? You know, whether that's to follow my joy, and follow the things that give me life; or to be like, wow – this is something that gives me pain, day after day, and my heart is aching about this so much, like, you know - should I be making it more of a priority in my decisions? or like, It's just the very simple... do I need to make an amend today? Because, I feel really guilty? Or I feel really bad about this interaction – why do I feel bad about that interaction? Like, what really went on there? And, do I just need to go talk to that person and be like, "Hey, I'm sorry for what I said." Or like, "What's going on?", "I want to get closer again," "What happened?" and you know, "Do you want to talk about it?" I feel like it's a window into</p>
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●	Alice	Practices	127	127	And I especially want to challenge them to think about how they can live the way they believe. And I think that, I, for some reason, that doesn't seem to be a big question, that people are... it doesn't seem to be a relevant religious question. I feel like, yeah, there's this weird – I mean, like, yeah, you shouldn't have an affair or you shouldn't have, I don't know – what? - sex outside of marriage or something – except that, like, people don't take that seriously either. I feel like maybe on some sort of sexual questions? Or maybe even like, lying or cheating, I feel like it's okay for religion to have an opinion... but for some reason it's not like... our country is founded on separation... like, our politicians aren't supposed to have a religious agenda. But, like, our religions can have a political agenda. That's not a founding value of our nation. But, for some reason, I feel like this question – “If you actually believe the things that you do believe, then why are you living the way you live?” Doesn't seem to be an okay question. And I just think it's, you know, I...and I think the reason people don't take it seriously is they feel like you actually can't live the way you believe. Like it's not, you know, like, that's a nice... like that's for idealists - but for real people – you can't really... like when you go to – you know, you gotta take a job... and when you go to work, you have to suspend your values. Or, you know, to make a living you need to suspend your values. And to like, I don't know, like, do everything – you need to suspend your values and I just think it's absolutely bogus.
●	Alice	Practices	131	131	What does it look like to me? Um... Just so many different things it could look like. You know, it can look like the sky, or it can look like frost, or dew in the morning. You know, it can... it can definitely look like watching someone who – it's like – watching people learn. Especially if you get to be with them long enough when they're learning, when they, like, start having confidence, and creativity, and ideas, and leadership – it's exciting to see that. For me, like, going down, and going out by myself in the woods. And, like, lying on the ground – I definitely like praying lying down, or meditating, or whatever that... like, I just feel really close to everything – connected...
●	Alice	Practices	156	156	mmm-hmmm. And the Catholic Workers – at least in the Midwest – the get together a lot. You now, like, we – every Fall we have a retreat for two or three - or this year – four days, and it's like kind of a fun retreat with you know... and then in the Spring we usually have a Faith and Resistance Retreat. So this year, it's like – that one is in a different place every year and it's usually on a different issue and we usually do some sort of civil disobedience, and this year was in Minneapolis with “Black Lives Matter”. And then, there's been farm gatherings in the Winters – like, every few years and we have been doing craft retreats in the winter when smaller groups get together and learn crafts and make things. Yeah, so, I feel like – and we write for each others' papers, and, anyway... I think that it means a lot to me that we are part of the Catholic Worker movement.

●	Alice	stewardship	168	168	I feel like every church group should be able to be like, "That doesn't seem right... I don't think that was, like, God's plan for, like, our stewardship of creation." I feel like all these sixty-year-old farm-men, you know, if they were really, like, looking at that... would be like, "Does this give me joy?" "Is this what I love about my life as a farmer?" "Is this how I want to steward God's creation?" You know, would they go talk to their pastors and be like, "I feel so good about all the pesticides I use." I just don't know what it would take for people to be able to say, like, I don't... yeah, like, if it's legislation so that this is, like, everybody could see what's really happening, or like if it's actually, like, people actually getting in trouble and paying big fines, like, if it drifted and killed things.
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●	Alice	work Practice	171	173	<p>I have a problem farming. I have a hard time farming – because farming’s really hard. And, like, a really diversified system is really hard. And, then we, like, dreamed up this crazy, like, I don’t know, not all by ourselves, but this crazy alternative economics and this crazy alternative food system and we’re just trying to do things in all these ways that are not the way our cultures works. And then we, like, want to have all these volunteers, like, participating with us, and we want to have this be a community thing. But, it’s not how anyone – or hardly anyone – was raised. It’s against the grain all the time. And I’m not, like, good at it. And I’m dealing with all these people that are just, like, ... it’s just foreign. Everything we’re trying to do is foreign on all these unconscious levels. And so, yeah, sometimes I’m like, well, it’s ridiculous. I’m trying to like... I should stop trying to be so against... It’s just exhausting to try to, like, to work so against the grain.</p> <p>But, yeah... What I would love to do is open everyone’s minds to the fact that they, like, they don’t have to work for rewards. They can work for, like, for goals. And for the reward of good work. And, like, of seeing a job well done and knowing that the job is important. And, like, and they can... they don’t have to have a boss, and they don’t have to have a lower person, and we can be equals, and we could be creative... and, like, I don’t know. I would like everybody to just, like, be able to shake loose, including me, like, everything that we were trained that tells us differently. And be like – what would it feel like if we could shake all that loose for... three months? You know, and just be, like, try another belief system on... and again, it doesn’t have to be mine - but like...</p> <p>What if it wasn’t true that you had to - for the rest of your life – work at some job - that you don’t love – in order to make a lot of money so that someday you’ll be happy? [laughter]... and secure! And you’re gonna be secure... ‘cause you’re not ever gonna be secure, and you could be happy today... Like, why... But, like, am I happy? Am I a good example? Like... “Look at me, I’m so happy...” [laughter]... But no! I’m, like, kind of stressed out and I’m trying to run this crazy farm... that like, everything’s broken and, you know, my workers don’t show up. And I don’t... I never know what’s gonna happen. So... There ya go...</p>
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●	Alice	work	188	188	It's like sneaking – it's sneaking into everything – and it's just a huge, huge deal. And I think that's something that the Catholic Worker Movement is trying to be courageous about but definitely, we could be doing a better job – as a movement. My faith community – like my – my church community I really wish that they were doing more. And, I... maybe, I... maybe it's arrogant, but I feel like it would be really good for my church community to be working with us more. I think that... I think that the... what we are doing as a farm is a great, like... it's really accessible for the people at our church. It's really accessible to be, like, we are going to do physical work to help grow really good food so that people who need it are able to have it. I feel like it's a really basic concept. It's really okay if you're into charity, if you're like "I do good by helping people who are really less fortunate than me..." I feel like that's a really easy concept for them.
●	Alice	work\Body	211	211	Yeah, absolutely. I feel like, yeah – as a nation – we're addicted to comfort. And, but it's just a really – yea. It's a hard thing to unpack. 'cause – comfort is nice! [KR: it is nice! - laughter] You know, and being uncomfortable is uncomfortable. But, it's also amazing. And, like, joyful. Like, as soon as you get comfortable with your discomfort, it's like, "why did I think I couldn't handle this?" It's like camping – it's amazing.
●	Louise2	stewardship	4	4	We became aware of the native species and that had been growing here before people came, and we decided that we would really like to try and establish the historical ecosystem of the native plants to attract the native birds and provide habitat for them. And that's become our biggest job on the farm. We continue to maintain the coffee and to harvest it commercially, but the native trees are really our biggest project on this land. And trying to improve the soil because this area had been used for agriculture for a long period of time. We learned from our neighbors who grew up here that the farm had been bulldozed at least twice. So, we knew that soil enrichment would be really important.
●	Louise2	stewardship	4	4	And I think I've talked to you about how we really don't feel like we own this land, it's just, we're just... it's a gift to us; it's on loan and we try to treat it that way. That we would try to steward this land so that, if anything, we could improve it, and take good care of it. And that's it's really just on loan from God. We're very grateful that we get to live here. We say prayers of thanks for that every day.
●	Louise2	stewardship	14	14	Oh, I just love this land. And I love the birds. I actually really like the coffee trees. They're pretty gentle. And they're so willing to hang in there. And that's what I find about everything that grows here. The bananas were here before we came too. So we didn't plant the bananas. We didn't plant the lemon trees. The avocados trees just volunteered. So it's like you feel like creation is giving to you.

●	Louise2	stewardship	14	14	And with the native trees, it just, I fully realized that man came and they, in a sense, developed this land. It's like building a housing development or something. They said, which is what we would do in modern-day, but they... man came and they said, "I can use this for this, and that for that, and it's all for me." But there were plants that were here that developed before anybody else was here, before any people were here. And so it's really kind of like God's garden. And it just seems like we really ought to try and preserve that. And delicate soil very lacking in organic matter. It is easily abused.
●	Louise2	stewardship	17	17	That that was Moa fern. It's just, it's like a link to the past. And what really belongs here. The climate is such that you can grow almost anything here. But to try to preserve some of the plants that, just, that God planted, and they're in danger because of all the stuff that man has done to this land. that idea just grabbed us, and we said, "Oh, that would be really nice if we could have more native plants." And we had no idea how many there were, where they would grow, who should be here.
●	Louise2	stewardship	18	18	And so we started investigating it. And NRCS was certainly a help. – I have to show you those books, the ones I talked about – and, um, we just kind of, I don't know, it was kind of like, we were convinced that that, just in our own hearts, that that's what we ought to be doing. we wanted more of the native plants to survive. To provide a habitat for the plants themselves. And we knew they needed help. That the other things that had been planted were -preventing them from reseeding themselves and from thriving. So, then we found the nurseries that grew them, and that was through NRCS. And we took a forest stewards class. And learned about how the Hawaiians had used the land, and started learning the Hawaiian names of the native plants. And it just, it just seemed like it was the right thing for us to do. And so we're trying to add as many different native plants as possible to make the bird habitat and provide bird food. And um, and we can, our love of that is like – and you keep hearing me say, "our", 'cause Bob is really in this together (laughter). And we both have the same goal. And so just to take care of the soil and take care of the natives - provide a place for those plants.

●	Louise2	Practices	18	18	we were convinced that that, just in our own hearts, that that's what we ought to be doing. we wanted more of the native plants to survive. To provide a habitat for the plants themselves. And we knew they needed help. That the other things that had been planted were -preventing them from reseeding themselves and from thriving. So, then we found the nurseries that grew them, and that was through NRCS. And we took a forest stewards class. And learned about how the Hawaiians had used the land, and started learning the Hawaiian names of the native plants. And it just, it just seemed like it was the right thing for us to do. And so we're trying to add as many different native plants as possible to make the bird habitat and provide bird food. And um, and we can, our love of that is like – and you keep hearing me say, “our”, ‘cause Bob is really in this together (laughter). And we both have the same goal. And so just to take care of the soil and take care of the natives - provide a place for those plants.
●	Louise2	Practices	19	19	It has become really important to us. And we not only do it on our own farm, but we volunteer to do it in other places.
●	Louise2	Practices	25	25	that nature is, is the place where I experience God most. And that it has provided me the most comfort at the very worst times in my life. I remember the very worst thing that ever happened to me, the only thing I could do, the only thing I could think of to take away the pain and the feeling of just utter desolation was to lie down flat on the ground under a tree and hug the earth. And so I feel that I'm just a part of creation. And that's a very profound feeling. It's not that it's my job to name everything and to have dominion over it. It is that I'm just a small part of creation. And that's really part of my theology. And so the idea of going back to the garden, is something that brings me closer to God. More than anything else, really. And once you, it's a good place to get your grounding.
●	Louise2	Practices	26	26	That's why I paint trees rather than anything else and, I want to feel respect for them. That respect and that wonderment of just looking at how stable they are. How fragile too.
●	Louise2	Practices	32	32	My friend Grace says, “you know what they say, ‘The best thing for a farm, is the farmers shadow.’” Love that phrase. Because you have to, you know you're not going to know if something is going wrong with the trees unless you go around and visit them.
●	Louise2	work	33	33	I also fertilize. I do all the fertilizing on the coffee trees. And the natives. And so that normally is every two weeks with nitrogen – so small doses, really small doses, of fertilizer. This whole farm, I put I think it's a ridiculously small amount. I'd have to look in the notes. It's maybe like 150 pounds of nitrogen over the whole farm.
●	Louise2	work	37	37	And so we have two weed whackers and we'll both go out and we weed whack the grass down.
●	Louise2	work	40	40	just in the daily walk, you go around and you try and see what, who needs help, what pest is bothering who. We do use BT to keep the plants from being eaten. And so I normally do that once a week.

●	Louise2	work/Practices	41	41	I spend lots of time each week processing food. Whether it's cutting up bananas and drying them, or when they get too ripe freezing them. Or squeezing the lemon juice. Zesting the lemons. I find that I spend a huge amount of time in the kitchen actually processing that food, putting it up. The pineapple we mostly dry as well. And then we can send that as gifts to our relatives. And they love it! It's amazing because you have this big pineapple and it goes right down to this little packet of dried pineapple. But it's really good. So, I spend an awful lot of my time doing that. Making our own bread. Just and tending the vegetable garden, which normally takes care of itself. It's perfectly amazing. But even just with the avocados. Go out every morning to see which avocados dropped last night so that you can make sure that they're included in your diet.
●	Louise2	work	50	50	o, for about two (2) weeks, two (2) to three (3) weeks, maybe, we're involved in that process of pruning the trees, picking up all the limbs, taking them to a central location where Ramon sets up a chipper where he will, we finally got him to where he will prune and chip right away.
●	Louise2	work	51	51	And then once everything is chipped then I cover the piles with black plastic. Yeah, and so, that's my job. To cover. And sometimes we have to move some of the chip piles. Bob and I have done that by shovel and trailer and stuff but we kind of, over the years we've gotten that down to a system so it's working really well now.
●	Louise2	Practices	61	62	We actually went on a hike recently that was a part of a field trip where the professor actually said, "We're going into a place so I would ask that you all be silent as we walk towards it and look at where you are, and look at what is around you."  And, to me, that is just, that is just the most beautiful space to be in.
●	Louise2	Practices	62	62	And again, it's what draws me to the Spirit; to the Divine. To just be humbled by the butterfly that's passing by. And talk to it, and say, "hey!" you know, and just to bring it into your presence, and not be on auto pilot... and "I'm thinking about the trip to town..." and just to be able to be on the land and be really mindfully present there is really important to me. And that it doesn't matter whether it's just my land. One of my friends, I remember saying, "everybody needs a special piece of land that they feel connected with. That is their connection to the earth." And, friend said, "do you have to own it?" And I said, "No. No you don't. It could be, it can be in a public forest. It can be in a park. It can be anywhere. But it's important for us as children of the earth to be present there. To have that special place where we can go." And sure, I'm speaking through my lens, but that's my lens. That's what I need.

●	Louise2	Practices	64	64	This is one of my special lands. I am open to all, to all lands. To be present there. But this is certainly my home. Right now. And yeah, and I'm still learning it. In Sand County Almanac he talks about, and in Pilgrim at Tinker Creek same thing – they talk about slowing down enough to see the bugs, see how the water runs. You talked today about the clouds moving faster than the water and watching the clouds - just watching the clouds. Oh Bob will tell you how I just sit here and watch the clouds just march down the coast. And, I was sitting here last night and you know I was saying, "Oh, they're not low enough yet..." And so it's important to me to be able to be a "weather witch". To learn where I think the water is under the ground. To learn what the sky looks like, what weather does that portend? So it's that whole ecosystem. It's the whole thing. To slow down enough in my humanness to realize that there is something bigger going on here and I'm just a really small part of it. And it really is my, I feel like, my job, to watch, and to become in tune with it - so that you can live in harmony with it. I mean that to me is such a gift. I mean, I spent years at a desk in front of a computer, helping people. That's great too, but this is what feeds my soul. The people do too. They really do. They really matter to me. But, for me – you spoke about how you wrote a book about how to not just take care of everybody else, but to take care of yourself. This is what takes care of me. To be nurtured by nature really takes care of me.
●	Louise2	stewardship	72	72	You sometimes see large numbers of a certain bird and you think, "what are they doing to the native birds?" which are really kind of rare. And that's why we're so conscious of trying to provide habitat for them. So, it's a – you can't undo everything that's been done. You have to be realistic about where you are in the process. But we really do appreciate all of them.
●	Louise2	work	73	73	And I'm actually – it sometimes, it gives me angst – the things we do do, what is it disturbing? What is it, you know like, this place could sit just the way it is, and what would happen? I don't know. There's no way of telling. I can tell you that bugs will eat a lot of leaves on my young trees. (laughter) I can tell you that. They can produce pretty good lace. But there's one kopiko tree down there that is - it has been eaten so many times and it's like, "No, I'm gonna try one more time!" The Kapiko trees are called the "praying hands tree" because that's the way their leaves come up. And then they spread out. So that's their nickname.
●	Louise2	Practices	91	91	And we went down there, and we found that if we recognized people, if we didn't pretend that those people weren't there, they were welcoming to us. And so we have a friend, I don't even know his name, but he's along the walk to the beach that we go to. And we always, I always make sure that we say, "hi" to him, if he's out. And it's lovely to be recognized as a person. That's all anybody needs – is to be recognized as a person. "I see you." And, we don't have any problems down there, and we just, we... you take, you know, I don't, I'm sure that they don't even know that we're the ones who bring extra produce down there. It's not about that. It's about saying, "I see you."

●	Louise2	Practices	97	97	Although I'm not the most gregarious person in the world, I really like being with people one-on-one and recognizing them. And I haven't had any problem here really. And we, it really... Our sphere really is here.
●	Louise2	stewardship	127	127	I'm takin' care of what He's given us. And that's the basic thing. Humans, with our free choice can do so much harm. And I just want to be a good steward of the gifts that He has lent us. And, yep. That's it. In a nutshell. A Macadamia nutshell. (laughter) Um, it is that desire to be grateful. And to show our gratefulness by care. And by trying to do right by His gifts.
●	Louise2	work	135	135	this is a gentleman's farm. This is more like gardening than... yeah... it's hard work at certain times, but I don't have to do it.
●	Louise2	work	144	145	<p>So, despite the gender divide, there's still a majority of women you see involved in the Kona Coffee Association, and farming, and...</p> <p>L: Yes. Yes, yes. So, I think the transient-ness is caused by that gender divide. I think that the... once... if the woman who is the kind of woman who wants to be on the land – they'll just, they'll hang on, you know. And it's often a person who wants to stay on the land that will be the one that ends up with the farm. Like Grace down here. She worked for the Forest Service. She has always made her living in the forest or on a farm, and she loves it. So she'll go on the volunteer trips with us. And even though her husband is actually a farmer too, but not at their place. A lot of individual stories, but you have to be the right kind of person to be willing to live in an isolated kind of life.</p>
●	Louise2	work/ Practices	150	151	<p>you said you pay Ramon 80% and is that just something that you have been called to do? Or...</p> <p>L: That's a faith call. Um, it's kind of like reverse share cropping where the sharecropper earns the most money and the landowner is just providing the opportunity. Because we do pay for all the chemicals too. So, the farmworkers make the major share of the income from the farm and that was really just us saying, "You know what, we have enough income. We need to share. 'Cause this feels good – for us." So, that's how we kinda came up with that formula. I think that there are probably other farmers in the same situation that we're in that are probably pretty angry with us for giving Ramon the fuel to say, "Well, Louise pays me 80%..." you know, so, and it might have been an unrealistic expectation, for him, that everybody would buy that deal; but it seems okay to me. It's just kind of... you know – that's really hard work he does, and I don't have to do the commute that he does and it seems like he ought to be fairly paid for it. So, yeah. And, but that was definitely just a moral faith decision on our parts.</p>

●	Louise2	work	190	192	<p>Pretty much not. We do have Hispanic contributors. And they mostly come from South America. We'll bring people over, or people will come for research here, and we'll get them to give lectures. And we try to include the Hispanic worker population in that by making sure that some of those are in Spanish. And, but, you... it's difficult to get them to come – 'cause those guys – Ramon says, "I don't have time to go to lectures, I gotta work!" I have gotten him to come to a lecture with me once and he finally went to the Coffee Berry Borer class so that he could take advantage of a program that gives you a subsidy payment to purchase the fungus needed to kill the borer. You know? And so, it's the timing of those, and, yeah. It's a pretty complicated system.</p> <p>That would be, in terms of the farmworkers, I wish that the... it was easier for the Hispanics to buy land to set up their own cooperative. And Charlie, down here, was just saying, "They're really gettin' better at it." That they're getting more cohesive. And I think that would be a great thing. Because they – each culture is different. We meld. But we're – but there are really different ethics and nobody works as hard as the Hispanic community. And they are just really really hard workers. And family-oriented. And, it's pretty neat to be with them.</p> <p>But you wish you could impart more. Even though Ramon has been doing this for a very long time. He knows nothing about nutrient management. If it says, "Coffee Booster" on the outside, it's okay. He knows nothing about soil preservation. Nothing about the pesticides. It's just – "We do what has been done in the past." Nothing about the idea of chipping and mulching. That was all new to him.</p>
●	Louise2	stewardship	206	206	<p>I came up with several of 'em, but that was the one that I settled upon. It is really important for, to perpetuate the water flow on this island. It's important to have trees and important to recognize how important creation is. And, that the way we've done it for so long in agriculture is not the best way.</p>
●	Louise2	work\Body	206	206	<p>My biggest fear is that I will run out of energy. I think. And I just have to pace myself. I'm lookin' at the clouds right now and I'm like... "Oh! Maybe I should throw. Maybe I should go out there and say, "One field! I'll do just one field! We'll see..." (laughter)</p>
	Amber	Work/body	78	79	<p>Biblically, I think it's important to be a woman and not a poor imitation of a man so the way I approach farm biblically is that I'm not going to be able to do this like a man. This farm is gonna look different and what I mean by that even just a simple example, I don't have the upper arm strength. That's a simple type thing, but I just don't have the strength to manhandle thing. More, more farm management is going to have be patience and kindness and work and asking for help and you know. So I think as far as the woman component of it, it becomes much more that, submitting to what you need to submit to which is God as the ultimate farmer.</p>

●	Louise2	stewardship/ practices	216	216	I hope that by the time I die there will be little enough coffee and more food crops. That when my kids come – in terms of tree crop – that my... that this will be an oasis for the birds and the bugs and the bats. And that my kids won't have to feel that there's a huge amount of labor for them to do. And that they do keep it protected. You know, and will protect it for as long as we can. And try to be good stewards of it. That's what I want for this land. I would just love to see more and more native plantings and so... a gentle use of the land that helps the other creatures and the land itself. That would be my hope. And, you know, I don't expect that they will become coffee farmers. I totally don't expect that. Ha ha. But they can rent it out to Ramon if they want. (laughter) He'd be happy with that. So... and that my farm workers would come to understand about the native species. And I realize that's a... it's an economic lesson. It has a broader vision.
●	Amber2	Practices	4	4	Church, it revolved, we never missed church. My friends will tell my mom, you like, "Oh we just couldn't make it to church." And I just know what she's thinking you know. She's thinking, you know, just priority. She knew what she could and couldn't do and she tried to give us as much structure of faith as she could.
●	Amber2	Practices	8	8	And you really towards the end of college is when I really committed my life to Jesus and following and just being in the word consistently and my own, working on my own thoughts, not listening to somebody else's thoughts. So I think once I started reading the word then you really started seeing the beauty of the farm. The service, the commitment, the suffering, the, you know you just, it was a real contrast from coming into this business world and this trajectory and you were gonna do all these things
●	Amber2	work/ Practices	8	8	And then he died three months later, so then I felt that was God's answer. That was why he was pulling my heart back here because I had something to do here and He was getting me ready. Ready to come, so I've been, again, not as much the farm, honoring my mother because this farm is, because of what I saw when I was five years old, I know how important this farm is to my mom. And I know it's my dad's dream too so I think when the bible says, "Honoring your father and mother," it means it. And part of honoring them is very specific to this place whether I like it or not that's the truth so coming back into that role, understanding, um, you know the idea of the widowhood and then losing her son, it just felt very much like it was all necessary to come back and farm and work alongside her. Tami just had a seven month old so she was in the throws of raising young children. The farm wasn't gonna be easy for her to come.
●	Amber2	work	12	12	It's something I've wanted for a while. And now it's just watching Sam and Gracie grow up, watching the generations. But it's yeah, it's exciting. I've played my part. I was not a principle role here. I was a supporting role and I liked it in a lot of ways. So, that's my role on the farm I think.



●	Amber2	work	14	14	And I think that as I started pursuing him, you start saying, “Lord what have you placed in my hands? Not that I’m striving for, not that I’m trying to do out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but Lord what have you placed in my hands that I can glorify you with?” And that was really the first question about the farm was – he has placed this in my hand. I mean it’s kind of like, “Lord I don’t want the story you wrote for me, so I’m gonna go write my own,” and He kept saying, “Come back. Come back.”
●	Amber2	work/ Practices	14	14	Your faith is definitely lived out as a farmer.
●	Amber2	work	14	14	So, does the work itself, do I love it? You know. Um, it’s hard to say. When it’s fueled by God and worship of Him, yes. I love it and I love watching, reading through the word and understanding and just understanding things that you wouldn’t understand.
●	Amber2	Practices	16	16	It also alienates you a little bit because you’re so not part of the regular world anymore. I have to fight sometimes to get, to understand where people are. Not fight, but.. it’s just, I just, I don’t come into a conversation easily a lot of times because I’m seeing so much of Him and so much of His truth that anytime I say anything that doesn’t look like His truth as shown in nature and, and in this work, I’m sort of like, “that’s not true.” (laughter) It’s fine, and you have free will and you can live like that, but um, let me tell you how the, ya know, what scripture says and how this works in.
●	Amber2	Practices	16	16	So it’s, I think that’s, that’s what inspires me here. Um, I, just a few years ago started reading more of the agrarian literature because I needed a voice to help me love my roots.
●	Amber2	Practices	20	21	I mean, you know just it’s, it’s something out there as opposed to worshipping Jesus here.  K: Right. You have to go somewhere else to do it.
●	Amber2	Practices	22	22	Yeah. And Jesus used the natural world all the time in his parables and he looked at life around him. Look at the sparrow; look at the wild flowers. So I think Jesus gives you permission to be contemplative. The world doesn’t necessarily give that to you and that space, but it almost feels like you have to defend yourself sometimes and be like, “I am doing something. I’m contemplating!” (hearty laughter) You know like, “Oh okay, honey.” It’s like..oooh. So I think that’s where I am right now as far as, but definitely, faith has been huge, a huge part of seeing the beauty of this place and embracing it. You know I was kind of born into the story, but I’ve had to grow into it. And in a different way than if I made the choice, “Hey this is gonna be my family. I’m gonna go get married. I’m gonna...” you know I feel like I never had that and God’s actually giving that to me now and saying, “you get to choose.” Where Christ has kind of chosen for me for a lot of years and I’m okay with that. That was His plan and um, I’m walking through. Okay good. That was long. Influences.

●	Amber2	Practices	26	26	Daily. Up early. Journal, prayer, prayer with journaling. Writing helps me wake up in the morning. If I just talk to Him, I just want to go back to sleep. So writing is just a wake up because 4 am is not natural to me. I don't wake up. My mind, but at one point I decided that God is a kind Father who greets me in the morning versus condemns me in the morning. You know saying, "Get up! Get up!" I think he's just going, "Come on. Let's come. I know your brain's a little a fuzzy and you're getting up early because you have to." So I spend time with Him and then I try to spend time reading, meditating, soaking in, you know just letting the word of God take everything. You know trying not to bring my thoughts into it even, just say, "Okay you know speak, speak today." (An update: Lately, I've been getting up and doing chores and then spending prolonged time in prayer and Word. I guess it varies.)
●	Amber2	Practices	26	26	You know as far as weekly, I try to take a day that besides the farm that I don't do much except spend time in prayer and the word. I wish I could say it's every single time, like every day. But one day a week where I have some time where's there's no demands on my schedule. And just spend time just listening and soaking, soaking Him in. I think through that.
●	Amber2	work\Body	26	26	You don't feel the same in winter that you do in summer. It's a very different burden. It feels different on your body and on your soul and I think I'm learning to embrace the depth of winter you know as opposed to trying to fight it, trying to pretend it's supposed a summer day. It's not a summer day, it does not feel the same. So I think those are the biggest contrasts.
●	Amber2	work	26	26	You don't feel the same in winter that you do in summer. It's a very different burden. It feels different on your body and on your soul and I think I'm learning to embrace the depth of winter you know as opposed to trying to fight it, trying to pretend it's supposed a summer day. It's not a summer day, it does not feel the same. So I think those are the biggest contrasts. Spring is, spring is exciting just as it should be. It's resurrection. It's life. It's everything coming. You're celebrating every new step. Summer is just, you know, summer is just summer. Try to get out by the lake and you know the evenings when the sun is setting and you're just, the cool of the day, it's starting to cool down and you're just with your family and you're doing, crops together. A lot of community. And fall is, Fall is still beautiful and everything changing through it. And our work changes a little bit, but we know what we need to do. And then you just get right into winter again. You get everything sealed up and ready for the next. So, it stays pretty consistent really. I mean the weather is always are, it's why farmer's talk about the weather so much. Really. I mean it's not small talk to them. It's, it's telling you about their workplace and the environment and if you talk to someone who works outside they get it and if you talk to someone who doesn't, they look at you like, "Why are you talking about that?" So, um, yeah, I think you know that's the basic, yeah.

●	Amber2	work	32	32	Who they are. I wish they never got sick. I wish they never died. But they do. And you come in. Um, yeah, I think just caring for them I think is my experience mostly and being patient and discipline like knowing when I need them to do something. There's a woman who said, "You ask them nicely once and you demand it the second time." And I think she's right or you just end up wasting a lot of energy. But you definitely have to train them. So, there's asking and then there's okay, "I get to be the boss." And that's okay. That's my God-given role and always has to be done with kindness. Maybe like parenting. There's a line where you need to be the one dictating the flow so that that is good experience.
●	Amber2	stewardship	32	34	But the land, I probably am more of the, um, considering the stewardship, greeting the wildflowers, watching leaves, so I don't have as much of the technical. I have more of the...  K: That's okay. Can you talk more about that?  A: the enjoyment of it.
●	Amber2	Practices	32	34	I probably am more of the, um, considering the stewardship, greeting the wildflowers, watching leaves, so I don't have as much of the technical. I have more of the...  K: That's okay. Can you talk more about that?  A: the enjoyment of it. Crunching leaves under my feet in the fall. Um, you know going out in a snowfall when it's like a lavender night and everything is falling, there's like a hush and there's a sparkle in the snow. You know just having the space to see that. We talked about sunrises, sunsets.
●	Amber2	Practices	36	36	We talked about the constellation and the moon and because I go out everyday I can watch, I can watch all of that. And it's not even huge moments of contemplation, but it's just looking at them and acknowledging that they're there and they're moving. We talked about clouds moving through the sky, water moving past [see notes about the forest walk we took].
●	Amber2	Practices	36	36	And yeah, so I think for it's being, it's being grounded here. I like to watch out my window you know the trees. Like now it's nice because I see the birds in the branches, but it's nice when the leaves come too. You know you watch them move and change. So I think for me it's more on that and I don't have to be thinking as much about planting and, and you know all the work that goes, but there's others in my family who love that.

●	Amber2	Practices	38	38	I'm seeing the generation I just wanna really be talking to Sam and Gracie about these things. Not preaching to them I don't think, but just saying, "Don't miss it. Don't move so fast that.." And I don't think they are. I think that's really been rewarding. I think they're much better kids at their age then I was. (laughter) Just much more aware and thankful.
●	Amber2	stewardship	50	50	And I think Agrarian did a better job of a lot of those, just starting to look, I'm just trying to think back that's being kind of general. It just gave me that permission to start loving my roots, to start slowing down, to embracing (pause) this quiet kind of humble stance of not knowing everything and being okay with it but still joining in and being a steward where you are which is, you know, it's a weird balance because we are heading to glory and sometimes when Christchurch says, "Oh this world doesn't matter all." It doesn't matter what we do. But I don't think the Bible teaches that, you know. I think we're stewards and everything's reflected there.
●	Amber2	stewardship	54	54	so I thought that was fascinating thinking about the people of Israel and working through the land and man, reading scripture all the time that was a whole different view of holiness being lived out very much as how they were stewards of the land. It was God's land, it was God's abundance, it was God's provision, but they, they had a role and a lot of the law was in-twined with that which was just a new way of thinking, thinking about it.
●	Amber2	Practices	62	62	Being here wholeheartedly. Being present. Watching. You know?
●	Amber2	Practices	64	64	Actively staying.
●	Amber2	Practices	64	64	Moving through resignation to just acceptance of this, this is God's greater you know, this, there's greater things going on here. Even though it seems very much like my home and I feel very familiar with it and it just gave me new eyes to say, "you don't know as much as you think you know." Um, watching you know just, paying closer attention to um, the life around you. Not as much going out there to find it but seeing what God is doing here and entering in. I think that has been the most helpful thing for me coming out of um, coming out of that. And even as I say that I am still feeling this call like God is moving me in a different direction, but I understand both now.
●	Amber2	work	70	70	But to watch her do it with other people was really beautiful. And she would do that from a young age on. So it was the farm, so it was that, yeah definitely you know we, we needed help and people generously came and helped us, especially right after dad died. And you know we were all still pretty young and working through, but uncles, neighbors, um, grandpa, cousin, just everybody just came and worked alongside.
●	Amber2	Practices	70	70	But I think there is something about that consistency and just get out of the world for a little while, they'll come here.

●	Amber2	work/ Practices	70	70	Some of my friend, some of my friends husbands, they would come out with their small children during the week and you know this was just wonderful for the kids. They just love it and then once in a while their husbands would come out and you'd see a real *takes a deep long sigh* and they're looking around and just the land and the space so I think you know we have some, one of Gracie's friends now likes to come and milk and she wants to do cows and horses someday and why her specifically, I don't know, but you just leave the door open and encourage her.
●	Amber2	work	82	82	So then biblically you can come underneath and say, "God what are you commands?" Because if I know there's commands and they're lined up then I know how you need power to do it. And you know he talks about masters and slaves and I know that's a loaded term, but I just look at it as masters and employees you know and he just asks you to work with all your heart for them and give them. So I think that coming under that structure she's my authority whether she's a woman or man, it didn't matter. She was the authority, but under God it's trying not to be something that I'm not as a farmer. That's been the most important thing as a woman, not to try to be a man. Because that kills your soul.
●	Amber2	stewardship	86	86	I mean you have daily bread, but again, it's not may place to look there and judge only with exception of how does this apply to my relationship with God and what our steward is.
●	Amber2	Practices	96	96	And that's where prayer comes, you know, prayer comes in and understanding the body and how we all work together.
●	Amber2	work	100	100	Our church is a very, has an urban feel to it. Sometimes I feel like it becomes more of a corporate business model in the church than family and I've worked in the corporate world and I've worked in family business. And you can have family business. I do believe Jesus has a mission. We have some work. We can have some shrewdness. We can have some you know putting some things out before him and taking that. But, it's within this structure that's already set of submission and, and coming in and generations and understanding what God says about the beauty of us growing older and that wisdom and that love where you know what and I can feel it at 41. Like I'd much rather serve someone else and breathe whatever life God can breathe through me into them, I would much rather breathe life into yo... I know I have all that, you know what I mean. I have all I need for myself.

●	Idea of submission as work here and in comment before... also with her role with her mom and the farm.	Amber2	work	110	112	<p>And maybe just recognizing that in the church, but again, were in a culture where people aren't forced to submit to it. So if you think you can just flutter away from it. If this is hard and you have to sit. But God has a funny way of, right?</p> <p>K: Yeah. (chuckles)</p> <p>A: Of humbling all of us. And we think that when He has us confined we're being punished.</p>
●		Amber2	work	148	148	<p>And once you're rooted in Christ and you know, it's not about selling anything to anybody. It's not about, it's about meeting them where they are and saying, there's hope, you know. But it's demanding and actually so demanding it demands all of you.</p>
●		Amber2	Practices	166	166	<p>You know, this is not, this is not you going to church, this is you live out this union and this prayer and you, you push through on the kind of that moment of standing before him saying, he's the master and he's putting the talonstalents, the money, that parable in your hands and saying, "Invest it." He's a God who wants you to invest it. He's not, don't be afraid of him that way. The test, you know in some ways test his generosity, so whatever he's given you. So when I was really looking at all of it, all of that and praying through it, just came back to faith, family, and the farm was a very strong. It was very clear and I understood that there was something very unique about this situation and I think as I'm always trying to relate to other people and understand and not just be like, "This is my experience!" But this really is my experience. And faith, family, and farm was given to me as part of the experience.</p>
●		Amber2	Practices	166	166	<p>So as we enter into this question and what that means, so how does your faith, your fueling it through Jesus Christ, you're examining the relationship between mother/daughter, you're examining the relationship between sister/family, you're examining relationships on submission, on I judged how my, my holiness, I know it's given through Christ and it's finished, but I don't worry about how much I'm serving in church, it's more how am I speaking to my mother and how am I treating the animals.</p>
●		Judy2	stewardship	2	2	<p>But he was like a good steward of the land really right from the beginning because he even rented, there was a place by Appleton that rented tillage equipment and he rented that way back then already. So why did he do that? I don't know. I grew up with a marbow plow and that's just what we did. So he was mindful of that right from the beginning so we just kind of followed through on his tradition.</p>

●	Judy2	stewardship	3	3	we did the whole barn and we worked again with land conservation. They were just great to work with. They just designed everything.
●	Judy2	work	13	13	I'm here, I mean I'm not going to retire until God makes me retire. As long as I'm able to work, I would like to work.
●	Judy2	work	14	15	But how are you influenced to do this work and maybe that's not just your background but people in your community, or authors, or faith?  J: I think more faith than anything.
●	Judy2	work	17	17	He tells you you have to work and you're not working for yourself. You're always working for him, so it's like well, I mean it just keeps inspiring you, you know the planting in the spring and then the watching it grow and the harvest and you had nothing to do about it and say. You know you put the the seeds in the ground, but from there it's all according to His plans. You know I guess I'd say that's probably it more than anything. And I enjoy what I'm doing. I mean I love working outside.
●	Judy2	stewardship	108	108	Because we have Duck Creek going through our entire farm so we have to make sure that we don't have manure runoff; that we don't, that our fertilizers and our chemicals are friendly to our land, ya know. So that they don't get in the water stream. Um, I don't know I guess we just try to do what's right too. I don't see anything a problem as far as all of these issues, but by working with Jeff, he's sees to it all so that we don't have all these things happening.
●	Judy2	stewardship	116	116	o I guess we just want to have everyone leave with just that, we want them to have knowledge of the farm - what's going on here probably more than anything that you want them to know that how the milk gets from the cow to you. How, you know that we keep things clean. That we care for our animals. That we care for the land. So I think those are some of the things you are looking for.
●	Judy2	work	122	122	ou always have people say to you, "if you need some help, just give us a call" you know, but we don't so we don't do it. But I mean people are willing to come. I mean there have been a lot of people through the years that have said, even this Jeff now, that grabbed our bill today, [referring to man from breakfast after church – different than agronomist] he's said that through the years too, "If you ever need some help you know, just give me call." This Tom O'Brien, he was retired and then he said, "Oh I grew up on a farm. I would just love to help you on the farm." Well, we don't need the help, that's the thing, but people would be willing to from the church if we called but we don't. We don't need the help. And we're not gonna stop working.
●	Judy2	Practices	126	126	Yeah, it is, our life is so simple, I mean that's the good thing about our farm that it's just simple life that...

●	Judy2	Practices	128	128	For us, it was what we could handle.
●	Judy2	Practices	128	128	You had a range of priorities. You have to know what you could do and what you couldn't do.
●	Judy2	Practices	128	128	I mean I wasn't, we weren't gonna get bigger. We were all happy with it just the way it was. It was profitable and even our accountant now will tell you it's a profitable farm. You know 'cause you expand and where does it stop? Then your heifer facility isn't big enough. Your calf facility isn't big enough. Your land, you need more land, I mean it just keeps growing. So we were adequately, we had what we needed.
●	Judy2	Practices	128	128	It was just fine the way it was.
●	Judy2	Practices	130	130	This is the day that the Lord hath made. I will rejoice and be glad in it.
●	Judy2	Practices	132	132	'Cause what do you do? You know you can't, you just don't have pity parties. You do kinda sometimes, but it doesn't pay. You know so, yeah.
●	Judy2	Practices	134	134	It's just something that you just do. I don't know, I can't explain it. You know what has to be done and you just get up and do it.
●	Judy2	Practices	135	139	K: 'Cause life has not dealt you the easiest of hands, so but your spirit is...  J: Yeah, but you learn from that you know.  K: But your spirit is so joyful and admirable.  J: Yeah, and it's all 'cause of Him.  K: But I watched you yesterday walk into that barn and just light up and it was just really beautiful to follow you yesterday and see that so thank you.
●	Judy2	Practices	140	140	Yeah, thank you. It's fun, it's fun having you here. 'Cause it brings back some memories. You know yeah. You don't talk about it as much. Some days you just kind of have to put it on the back burner. You just have to say okay that was yesterday and this is today and what tomorrow brings we don't know, you know, so it's like okay, yeah. We're good for today.
●	Judy2	work	152	152	You know the next generation can take over, we're done. (laughs again) I mean I'm not done yet, but you know, but if I am called, I'm done. Yeah it's fun. It's good. And you see what kind of influence you've had on grandkids and stuff and just think that's all part of the, part of the joy of seeing them grow up too now. I enjoy this so much and our little Sam, driving the tractor with me and all of a sudden and you watch him grow up alongside you and there he is taking over.



●	Judy2	Practices	171	172	But I do hear your cooking is legendary.  J: We do, we do. Not as much as summer as what I do in the winter. Winter we always just put, bake a lot. Like bars. We have Bible Study so I always make bars for Bible Study. They always look forward to that. The ladies appreciate that. And we like to bake bars and cookies and things. When apples you do a lot of apple stuff. When strawberries are in season you do a lot strawberry stuff. Rhubarb is coming up.
●	Jeannette2	work/body	73	73	I really appreciate the, the aspect of hard work that's involved I think with your body in particular that now that a lot of my peers, my generation being college educated, ya know the slice of my hometown we kind of lose this respect for weeding, hard work, bending over and thus that is what is contributing to the devalue of our food and this like widening chasm between social classes of people who do do this bodily hard work and people who get paid exponentially more money to work in an office. And I think that is what my intern year was all about coming from UCLA, getting paid so much money to do, ya know, very useful things, super useful things, but um, but then being so unprepared to spend 8 hours in a field and knowing that a lot of my peers, too, would have a hard time with it. We need to pay people more to do this work. It's hard and it's so like a metaphorically and physically important to be raising food for people. So yeah.
●	Jeannette2	work	75	75	Well, um it's changed drastically the whole time I've been here, but right now it looks like mainly four days out in the field and one day doing the a bit of sales coordination with the schools, doing all the crop planning, and ordering the seeds and um, soil fertility plans, crop rotation, things like that. Anything having to do with the field that needs to be done in an office and then I work out in the fields – a lot of weeding a lot of harvesting a lot of moving trip drip tape.
●	Jeannette2	stewardship	79	79	So we in the process of the two to three years I have been working here, tried to learn how to not go to farming with such an emergency mentality of urgency of [voice goes higher/faster and emphasizes stress] "Okay we'll plant here, we'll plant there." But kind of see the bigger picture of how can we set up our fields so that it facilitates this movement of soil stewardship instead of just planting.
●	Jeannette2	work	97	97	I do farming because it's fulfilling work, it's meaningful work. It's really nice to have a steady flow of nutrient dense vegetables in the kitchen. It's also really a spiritual practice for me, especially weeding. Weeding is like my favorite thing about farming (laughter). I know, it took a long time to get there, but it's a daily practice and it's a, really meaningful to run your hands over an entire, touch every single plant in a row as you're removing the weeds. It helps with the weeding in your brain too – that's a really cheesy metaphor

●	Jeannette2	work\Body	97	97	So, I think because our spirituality is so connected with farming - it's every day is a spiritual practice – and sometimes we get caught up in Wednesday morning [CSA pack day] running around AHHHH; your body hurts and all of that stuff. But I think, at this point after doing every day for so many years, there's always that spiritual component of like, getting to know more about God – the masculine, feminine, everything side of God that is reflected right back at you when you're engaging in stewarding the land or taking care of the land. I mean, it's such a treat, it's such a blessing to be able to see who, find out more God by coming to a five acre little piece of land like every day of your life almost and seeing the difference between the differences between every hour and differences every month and every year and how that reflects a lot of things about yourself and about spirituality back.
●	Jeannette2	stewardship	97	97	But I think, at this point after doing every day for so many years, there's always that spiritual component of like, getting to know more about God – the masculine, feminine, everything side of God that is reflected right back at you when you're engaging in stewarding the land or taking care of the land. I mean, it's such a treat, it's such a blessing to be able to see who, find out more God by coming to a five acre little piece of land like every day of your life almost and seeing the difference between the differences between every hour and differences every month and every year and how that reflects a lot of things about yourself and about spirituality back.
●	Jeannette2	Practices	99	99	On a wider lens I think it's a commitment to a sustainable food system but not just ecologically but also socially, I think that is important to a lot of people who are in our community. But on a smaller lens, I think it's... we cook a lot and that is a deeply, um, it's a theological, it's, it's deep to cook for each other and eat together.... But yea, probably, mainly that we're all committed to trying to find ways to transform our food system.

●	Jeannette2	work	111	111	I am not a traditional farmer in the sense that I grew up on a piece of land and it's been passed down in my family for generations as well as growing practices as well as concept and ideology. So I am a newcomer to this space in a very non-traditional person to be in this field. And I think to add to the woman question, the main reaction I've gotten from people is like, "You're not gonna be here in like in another year. You're not gonna be here in three years because it's hard work and you're gonna get dirty and I'm like, 'I know. I am really dirty right now actually!!'" But because as a newcomer, part of working here and in conjunction with us moving so often to land to land to land is this feeling of rootlessness as a young farmer as not having a tradition to fall back to and so more so this work here is about the daily weeding and it's about the harvesting and it's about the crop planning and all that. But it's also about finding my place as a young farmer in this new generation of young farmer's in America because there are so many of us and um, so I'm just trying to like figure out who I want to be and how to utilize this market that is very geared towards a different demographic to grow food and ya know change the system somehow to make it easier and more sustainable, like economically sustainable.
●	Jeannette2	work\Body	123	123	I would say large picture, big picture, the reason why I am such a big fan of the Abundant Table beyond the obvious ya know we get vegetables from them, they pay me, is they're one of the first sustainable farms that sees sustainability in a bigger than just ecological sustainability but more, there's people harvesting that food that is grown without pesticides and what are we to do with them? What about when they get sick? What about...so, I've met a lot of farmers who focus so much on caring for the land but not for the very present people who are on their land too. So, I, I, I think there has been so much government bureaucratic action on making like USDA um, improving the organic legislature and surrounding that, but I don't see as much happening with the um, the the, the sustainability of the people who are working for the people who are growing organic vegetables. There's this like invisible line there where compost and no-till and chickens and ya know, there's been so much thought put into creating this integrated food system on a piece of land, but then like, still high rank folks for a day laborer paying them practically nothing and not caring for their bodies in the right way. So that's my biggest wish, but then again if you ask me if the follow-up question is how do I change that, I have no idea.
●	Jeannette2	Practices	136	136	our job in a sense is very simple because luckily food is delicious (Laughter) and vegetables taste really good, um, and they're fun and they're beautiful so I know Erynn, our farm educator does a lot of work to get people cooking and to get them interacting with vegetables in a way and educating folks like especially from a young age what it means to to eat vegetables and how it's – it's kind of hard, but it's also a lot of fun, and I think a lot of the, um, typical marketing that is used right now is very directed towards one group of people.

●	Jeannette2	Practices	137	137	I always think about my mom who is from Singapore and doesn't give two-bits about ya know, like, hipness or ... She's very practical. She comes from a very very very food-rich, cooking-rich cultural environment and how to appeal to her ya know, to... to change her habits from ya know buying produce at Albertson's because it's really inexpensive and right next to the house and the way I've seen it transform in her life is that I just bring really good vegetables home and she is so excited to cook with them. So just thinking about how to appeal to different demographic that just like the more wealthy...
●	Jeannette2	work	157	157	So they've tried to, we've had a couple of relationships with churches and they just drop off because it's hard work. It's cooking a lot and it's using vegetables that you may not necessarily be familiar with. Things like that. Yeah. But I think it would be nice to see...like you were saying more visionary voices in this movement that were more reflective of gender and race and while I love Wendell Berry and Wes Jackson, especially Wendell Berry, the future would be nice to see Reyna or Zega Ortega
●	Jeannette2	work/body	161	161	Probably something about the dangers of losing our relationship to our humanity by not getting down on our hands and knees and looking at soil and little weeds and food. And how it's a very easy way to keep grounded and helpful and not think you are in charge of anything is to work for a farm because everything is completely out of your control pretty much. Yeah, and the importance of, of... I mean, you go out in the fields and I'm sure you've experienced this at your house, but it's impossible to not get into a deep conversation and work through some stuff when you're in the fields because you're dealing with very fundamental concepts. Out in the field you're dealing with water, and you're dealing with earth, and you're dealing sun, and you're dealing with wind, and um, and a lot of everything else gets blown away when you're sitting there talking to someone and ya know putting your body to good use. (bird start chirping beautifully)
●	Reyna	work\Body	5	5	The weeding required a lot more patience and a little more physical labor, ya know, bending at the waste.
●	Reyna	work\Body	5	5	The workplace actually gave me space to breathe and relax
●	Reyna	work	5	5	I started working and hearing a lot about faith and earth and faith and land. What were these hippies talking about, were they smoking weed? (we all laugh). I really felt like a transition between being just someone who worked in the fields to someone who was really involved in the work.
●	Reyna	work	5	5	I was born in Mexico City so in the city there's no farms. In school, there was definitely a lot of education around recycling and taking care of the environment. So on that side I did have a little bit of education surrounding the farm. When I moved here, and started working, I mean nothing was really normal for me. I noticed the pesticides in the fields and started making a connection between pesticides and farm worker health which was kind of like the last thing spoken about.

●	Reyna	work	7	7	So then I started feeling very satisfied with where I was working, I really appreciated it. I was really satisfied that I wasn't just recycling or just remembering to turn off my facet, but was actually taking care of the earth, taking care of the land. It was very satisfying to be earning the money I needed to be earning and doing this work at the same time. At first I was really excited to realize I was working on an organic farm and ya know taking care of the land and was really helped with just that information.
●	Reyna	stewardship	7	7	I was really satisfied that I wasn't just recycling or just remembering to turn off my facet, but was actually taking care of the earth, taking care of the land. It was very satisfying to be earning the money I needed to be earning and doing this work at the same time. At first I was really excited to realize I was working on an organic farm and ya know taking care of the land and was really helped with just that information.
●	Reyna	stewardship	7	7	I realized too that the earth needs someone to take care, maybe I need someone to take care of her, not necessarily another person, but like God. And ya know a force a much bigger force. So it's been a difficult process, but no not really difficult, just long.
●	Reyna	work	9	9	But sometimes I felt desperate like now what do I do? So I'm kind of mixing both issues, both topics of agriculture and faith. I was, as I was going through this process, I was also going through, on the land, with the agriculture, I was going through the same process with my faith. and what I call God. In some, .. I was hearing voices in my life telling me to let some things die and to let some things go. In Santa Paula in the fields in Santa Paula I had a complete transformation in my life. Like as a farmer, a worker, someone who works in agriculture and then in another side just as woman, as a mother, as a creator. Because when you're weighed down by a lot of things you can't create because something's holding you back
●	Reyna	work	9	9	A lot of seasons, I would put all of my energies into something really work. I learned how to put down seed, how to water, how to take care of the plants, how to weed. But then maybe a bunny comes or a ya know some sort of illness or too much heat, too much wind, a frost. I always wanted to have everything under control, like a perfectionist, have it be a certain way. I realized in the fields that I don't have the power to make anything perfect and also in my family I don't have the power to make everything perfect. Sometimes I couldn't understand it, but now it's a lot easier for me to accept. So sometimes in the farm we planned two rows of something in a particular are and then neither of them work, neither of them grow. So then the think this part of earth, this little land is kind of, has a problem. And then sometimes a third time we put something else and it did grow and blossom. So I really learned a lesson of persistence and to keep trying. And in it's own time it will work.

●	Reyna	work/ practices	18	18	It's very different from a lot of farm managers because actually we have to do everything (laughter). When we plan a harvesting week, it's me really doing everything from harvesting to washing to transporting. Once a week we do a walkthrough the fields to know what products are gonna be available for the CSA boxes that week and the schools that we wholesale to. So every three weeks, we dedicate a day to seeding, planting, so that we always have a continual supply of crops.
●	Reyna	Practices	18	18	It's very different from a lot of farm managers because actually we have to do everything (laughter). When we plan a harvesting week, it's me really doing everything from harvesting to washing to transporting. Once a week we do a walkthrough the fields to know what products are gonna be available for the CSA boxes that week and the schools that we wholesale to. So every three weeks, we dedicate a day to seeding, planting, so that we always have a continual supply of crops.
●	Reyna	work/ Practices	22	22	Well in an experiment (laughs), in my first weeks at the Santa Paula farm with Angel always telling her "you gotta weed, you gotta weed, you gotta weed," so I was a little frustrated about it, maybe cursing the weeds. And I felt like those plants that ya know weren't growing, kinda ugly. So because I was present, but not like really fully present in that job and slowly I stopped being so frustrated, started taking with the weeding and starting to appreciate the little... - it seems like it sounds crazy and I'm not even smoking a joint, but I really see the difference. (laughter) So ya know it changed because I was just more happier and even working happier and even if I was sad, I would still be happy and learn to express to myself and learn to cry and talk about it. And the fields were beautiful, the plants were beautiful. And I shared that with Angel that I was thinking that the state of the plants had to do with how they were feeling and how I was feelings. And then other men, sometimes farmers, would come to work on the fields in Santa Paula and tell me, "Oh you're not doing your job well; it's not gonna work this way." And I would say to them, "Oh okay," but I would really try to tune them out and tell the plants, "No, no, it's gonna work." And then the same workers would come back a couple weeks later and see the progress and be like, "Hey, how did that work out?" So I could see if you have the right attitude and you take care of them, the plants will receive it.

●	Reyna	Practices	24	24	<p>hat's a good question because now I feel I am just as crazy as everyone else. I can't really explain but we're created from the earth. So if you believe it or not, for me there is a really big connection. There's a phrase in Spanish that says, it's the earth that works. When I'm in the farm I feel free. For years I worked in fields but I didn't have that connection of seeing the creation. Because before, perhaps, my idea of God is that he's in the heavens, he's in the sky, but on the farm, you can see the cycles of life. And not only about just the seeds, so it can be you're not even working in a farm, that your hands aren't in the earth, but this pattern of planting and harvesting – it's in your life. You are always going to harvest what you've been planting. So if you're planting destruction, you're going to harvest destruction. So if you want to create or recreate your life your going to have a resurrection. So that's really how I see this God, this God of second chances that he will always be there to receive you. So it's like I was saying with that one little piece of earth that I had planted twice ya know, once it didn't work, another time it didn't and the third time it did. So maybe the first time it wasn't working because I wasn't putting my heart into it. And then when I did put my heart into it, it did work and it's the same with life.</p>
●	Reyna	work	27	27	<p>What Angel was talking about – work abuses do happen. But the problems really with two people, the abuser and the victim. And lots of times victims don't want to get out of that place. It's a lot of lack of education and a union – lack of a union. And wanting progress. Because sometimes we are just happy with what we have or people are just happy with what they have because people say, "Oh things are bad but they are not that bad, they could be worse." So they just accept a lot of things. I think one possible solution would be to have open workshops or open educational session directly in the fields for the farmworkers. And really I think an important educational pieces is to let them know that if you don't give yourself value, no one else is going to value you. That may be one way to solve it.</p>
●	Sarah	Practices	3	3	<p>Eucharist and Communion and the breaking of bread. Every Sunday we had a Eucharist service with a potluck afterwards and felt like food and table fellowship and also access to the table, both access to the Eucharist table but also access to food, farm worker's rights, issues around food access, food justice, food sovereignty were things as a campus ministry we were interested in.</p>
●	Sarah	Practices/ stewardship	9	9	<p>And I guess I just started to get interested in ecological stewardship, but also more so for me the interest was in community development, building community and what does it look like for the church to be in the world and how do we create kind of alterative communities that support people who are experiencing ya know that support. People are experiencing marginalizing, experiencing major challenges, but also just any, I think we're all searching for community and groundedness and connection. And I was really interested in alternative economic models like cooperatives.</p>

●	Sarah	Practices	11	11	that community turned into a farmer's cooperative and I joined the cooperative and started working with them –
●	Sarah	Practices	11	11	I began to think of what it meant to kind of ya know, express word in sacrament in the field instead of in the sanctuary.
●	Sarah	Practices	11	11	being able to begin to explore ya know my own cultural upbringing and understanding of theology and spirituality and um, it's kind of connections to justice and ecology in community and love and Jesus and all of those things and being able to do that in a community that choosing that same language was really powerful.
●	Sarah	Practices	11	11	And then also I think for me just vocationally beginning to create spaces for other people to explore their own ...their own journeys, their own kind of needs for connection, and that was something I think I've really grown to value is recognizing the church as a place that creates um, where we kind of like are architects of space for others to ya know encounter God and encounter themselves, encounter their neighbor in a way that leads to transformation.
●	Sarah	Practices	13	13	S: Yeah, we, I mean myself personally but then also kind of the foundational um, ... oh the kind of principles or values of the Abundant Table is reconciliation and looking at reconciliation and ya know beginning with looking at sin as disconnection um and broken relationship or disordered love and that our work is around reconciling those pieces and not that we ourselves are fully reconciled as we do it, but that part of our reconciliation is being reconcilers. I guess I'm trying to think of how to kind of express reconciliation but that thought of restoring right relationship, restoring just relationship, thinking of reconciliation and righteousness as being part of a just and whole world that reflects I guess the trajectory of ya know what scripture and specifically in the New Testament Jesus' trajectory of the beloved community. So I think for us it's been looking at what does it look like to be a reconciler and we say to reconcile to land, reconcile to neighbor, reconcile to ourselves and then reconcile to God. And what needs to, and what spaces and places do we need to be able to do that and be able to live into that and what gets in the way?
●	Sarah	Practices	22	22	create space within the Abundant Table to house multiple narratives but then also push a lot of our interns and a lot of people that come into our worshipping community come from places of privilege and dominant cultures and really looking at ways to really push us out of even our most radical notions that have come out of our white church communities and push into just being in relationship to places and spaces and people that are different. So I think the Abundant Table really works to create spaces that push everyone into new relationships that would not normally, yeah.
●	Sarah	work/ Practices	27	27	I am currently in the field once or twice a week. That is newer...I was... that's a newer thing that is happening because I was realizing how much I missed it



●	Sarah	work	29	29	I missed the tangible nature of feeling my work. I hate sitting in front of a computer actually and I don't know if that's something... I think it's always been me. I love writing and being in front of a computer but I, when it just becomes your job... yeah it's kind of actually like very draining. So I was just feeling very drained and burnt out like I needed space to kind of reconnect and not feel so disconnected from the work our community is doing.
●	Sarah	work	29	29	And I feel like keeping the Abundant Table surviving is kind of like my cal – is what my work is. But also feeling that if I'm inviting and asking our farm team to being doing things like I need to be on the farm too. I just didn't feel it was right for me to talk about farming and agriculture if all I did was work from a desk and meet with people about it. I felt like it's important, um, ya know, to be in the field. And I would say the Abundant Table there's no one farmer, all of us together kind of make up the farmer. Because there is no one person that knows the whole picture because we all have come at it from a different place and no one actually studied it and so we've all learned different pieces and hold that together.
●	Sarah	work	30	30	Kind of outside of the farm my work is community meetings. Doing a lot of work supporting like y a know where does our produce go to creating systemic change, not me personally, but working with groups that are creating systemic change to create more opportunities for just our farm alone to be successful financially.
●	Sarah	work	32	32	I liaise with the Episcopal church a lot and so actively going and telling our story because I feel really strongly about sharing our narrative as being really important. So going to conferences and things like that.
●	Sarah	work	34	34	Yeah, I love being in the field. I'm slow, definitely slow.
●	Sarah	work	50	50	I think over the years, ... just ya know as a woman, as a young person also, someone with mostly student debt and very little social capit... I mean, I just feel like I lack access to so many things and that I, we have to work harder to create space for what we want to do. Like I'm not gonna buy property any time soon.
●	Sarah	work	50	50	And that I'm, my work is around my survival or around the survival of my community. In some way, and I do put some of that to being a female, to being a young adult in this era, not all of it, some of it is just where you were born and happened to land. But that is definitely – it's neat to connect with other women, but then having this ah –ha moment and that everyone's kind of celebrating it but then having this ah ha moment like, we're always working harder because our survival is different.
●	Sarah	work	52	52	And that we always kind of carry the load.

●	Sarah	Practices	54	54	I would say initially there is kind of a subtle, kind of undergirding like foundational layer of spirituality that anyone experiences when they connect to farming and to agriculture, to growing food. Our organization, myself, the people that are part of our organization are very explicit about it though, which is why we do feel that our worship service is such a tangible kind of, in a sense the farm is an outgrowth, or like was born out of our worship and our prayer, but now it feeds ..the farm, the farm both feeds figuratively but also literally because we have a potluck afterwards and everyone, our CSA members bring their food. So that breaking bread together both ya know bread and wine around the table at Eucharist and then it happens with like salad and soup afterwards. And then that's very much like feeling like we're practicing our faith and we're practicing what we believe about feeding and being fed.
●	Sarah	Practices	54	54	You know so many of our choices about being intentional about how we relate to farm workers and our community, how we treat our own staff, are connected, come out of a faith commitment to equity and food sovereignty.
●	Sarah	stewardship	54	54	But I think we're also exploring what is the language that we want to use to talk about spirituality and faith and ecology and stewardship and the theology of place. We were actually saying a theology of place and displacement because it seems you can't talk about place without talking about displacement because I think that's what pretty much everyone in our community has experienced.
●	Sarah	Practices	54	54	Within the Episcopal Church we're really active in developing larger networks very practically that are supporting other communities wanting to do similar things. Recognizing that it's born out of within the Eucharist, within the Episcopal Church, a Eucharistic theology of sin, and reconciliation, faith and formation and just feeding and being fed.
●	Sarah	stewardship	54	54	But I would say we are definitely committed to the Christian journey and we're committed to the Jesus story but also very ecumenical and interfaith in our approach – recognizing that everyone needs to be rooted in their own traditions to better engage and these conversations around ya know ecology and environmental stewardship.

●	Sarah	Practices	58	58	Our spirituality is very Eucharistic. I would say everyone has a strong connection to understanding the elements on the table, the bread, that the wheat and the water and the wine and the grapes, that the very elements of the earth are what feed us to be kind of the elements of the earth for others in that ya know not only do we share the image of God and our relationship with Christ is looking at the image of, but like, Christ was born of a women so Christ was born of water and of soil and shares the same element that we all share and that connection is eternal and that's also what we remember each week when we break bread. It reminds of that deep connection. We talk about water a lot, so our Eucharist service is water of life, bread of life... or water of life, word of life, bread of life. And the water of life is understanding our baptism as committing to a way and the power of baptism is being symbolized by water which is one of the ya know the greatest element of within the earth, but also water is a liquid; it's a, it can be oh ya know there's all these different phases water can go, it can be a solid, it changes, it is part of a life cycle, so kind of a lot of our spirituality and our theology is looking at how the elements that we experience every day are so connected to how we begin to see our Christian journey and our like journey of faith and gosh, it's probably something to think about
●	Sarah	Practices	87	87	when we moved here, like they did, we did the first land blessing that ever happened here when we moved here. We're talking about doing a wedding. And I know Phil the landlord made a comment how neat it is to have these things happening. In some ways I feel like we are like a chaplain. Oh and we, we are definitely, we receive the benefit of being on the land, but what we bring is kind of a gift to the people who are here.
●	Sarah	Practices	87	87	Like the other workers who are here that see a different way of how we do things and also just inspiring folks who are in sustainable agriculture to not just see it as production but like to really see a different side and so I think, I think we've been a gift to every place we've gone.
●	Sarah	Practices	129	129	I think it's something that is hopeful, um, I think it's also something that when they come and experience and visit, they experience community in a way they rarely ever do in their own church community and I think they experience a connection to creation in a way that they never experience and I just think you can't help but feel excited and inspired and I think a lot of folks feel and many people are gardeners and they love to talk about their gardens which happens a lot (laughter) and I mean maybe even on their windowsill but like people love that and I think that makes them love us which is kind of funny.

●	Alice	Issues/ conflicts	6	6	<p>And I guess it's been my experience that there are people who... yeah, there are people who want to... I don't know, there are people who want to do things, but you know, starting something is a big deal. And there's just a lot of steps and there's a lot of risk in starting something. So there are a lot of people who maybe want to talk about it, but they don't want to do it. Or, they want to do it but they're not gonna do it. And again, this makes me sound arrogant, I guess. And there are a lot of people who want to come and visit something that's been started. And have... which I welcome and I think it makes a lot of sense. Like, it makes sense to learn in some place without having to take all the risk. And there are a lot of people who want to start their own thing. You know. They don't want to start something together.</p>
●	Alice	Issues/ conflicts\ Moving/land issues	7	13	<p>We were hoping that someone could give us something. Or lend us something for a trial. And lots of... it was really hard, I guess. Things are really expensive. Land prices are really expensive. They actually got more expensive. When we bought our land is probably like, when it was most expensive. Which is fine. But what I was surprised at was nobody was willing to rent an acre of land. And it's partly 'cause of the farm bill. And Just like, how much - how difficult it is actually. And how it can effect their subsidies if they're not growing corn or beans on their land.</p> <p>KR: Even on one acre out of, like, 280?</p> <p>A: Right... well it just affects that one acre, and I think things have changed since then, but I think it could effect the status of that one acre for I think, like, a long time.</p> <p>KR: Oh, I see, yeah.</p> <p>A: And there's something else too about, like, you can get in trouble for getting subsidies if you're also growing commercially – vegetables on your land – which I think is a California thing? I think, like, California doesn't want other people to grow vegetables and have...</p> <p>KR: (sarcastically) you're welcome [laughter]</p> <p>A: And things have changed since then, but, so I don't know the status of anything... but it was very difficult to find anyone to rent an acre of land. So we were really lucky. And it was a great deal. So, for five years we had a farm.</p>

●	Alice	Issues/conflicts	21	21	I like being a farmer. For me, my faith definitely has some ebbs and flows – but I definitely feel like I’ve been just through a period of, like, what am I doing? And this was, like, because this farm has been, like, this farm is such a huge deal. I just think about my last nine years of my life have just flown by. And I’ve dedicated so much of my life to this vision and this work. And I’m like, well, what is it doing? Is it doing any good? We’re, like, financially, we’re kind of a wreck on every front – I mean, myself, and Nate, and the farm and, like, our buildings are falling down. And like, you know, maybe it’s ruining my marriage, and I am not having any children... and maybe I’ve sacrificed all these things that I should have been doing in my 30’s. You know, and here, I just turned 40 – that’s why I’m having this big crisis – I just turned 40 in February!
●	Alice	Issues/conflicts	31	31	We’ve been, for the past eight years, having a round-table and a pot-luck every Friday in the summer, and then once a month in the winter. And, that might change this year. We have a pot-luck dinner and we have a discussion or activity around topics of the environment, or spirituality, or social justice, or farming – so, it’s pretty broad, but it’s not everything on the planet. Our attendance last year was pretty low on those, so we’re trying about, like, is there – you know, what is the point of those things? And, can we be meeting that... is there not a desire for what we’re trying to accomplish? And, could we be joining other people who are doing those kinds of things? Or, could we be hosting events that are more what people want?

●	Alice	Issues/ Conflicts	32	32	<p>we have struggled with spiritual practice - which is maybe why you're asking this question – I don't know - but we have really struggled with any kind of consistent spiritual practice on our farm. Which makes me sad, but which doesn't make other people sad. So, yeah, we are like this spiritually-based farm that is super open and wants people of all faiths, or of none, to be welcome and included here, and I would like to – within that framework – to still have some spiritual practice. And it is hard to, um, find something that everybody loves. And it's also hard to initiate things when people have quite different practices. A lot of people, I think, more and more in the world, or in the United States, just are uncomfortable with spirituality or, definitely religion. And so, yeah, would like to just avoid it altogether or are instantly... associate any spiritual conversation with some sort-of negative, like, proselytizing experience they've had. So, that's a really hard culture to navigate for me. So, the one thing that we've found to be universally un-offensive – is a practice that I love – which is, well you kind-of saw a shorter version of it with our 'Roses, Buds, and Thorns' today at the end of our harvest – but we do our consolations and desolations – usually at lunchtime – and that's every day, with whoever is here for lunch... but we didn't do it today. And, yeah, actually, I got that practice from Gary. He's really into, sort-of the Ignatian examen, and it's like the super short and easy examen exercise. And what I like about it is it's an opportunity for people to become closer to each other and it's an opportunity to self-reflect about what it is that gives me joy, and what it is that's hard for me. And I like that exercise as an exercise for myself or for a person as like, but it's not so... it's like a slow and patient spiritual exercise, I guess, in that, like - let's just notice everyday – or, for me, let's just see if I can notice – all the time – in theory – right? What is giving me joy? And what is painning me? And to listen to that. And if it gives me joy – is it a real joy? Or is it just a momentary satisfaction? And if it is a pain – is it a real, like, heart-soreness? is it bitter-sweet? Or is it, you know, am I ... Did I just not get what I wanted, or am I really sad? Is it sad for the world? And what does that mean? And, how can I use that information to change how I live in the world? You know, whether that's to follow my joy, and follow the things that give me life; or to be like, wow – this is something that gives me pain, day after day, and my heart is aching about this so much, like, you know - should I be making it more of a priority in my decisions? or like, It's just the very simple... do I need to make an amend today? Because, I feel really guilty? Or I feel really bad about this interaction – why do I feel bad about that interaction? Like, what really went on there? And, do I just need to go talk to that person and be like, "Hey, I'm sorry for what I said." Or like, "What's going on?", "I want to get closer again," "What happened?" and you know, "Do you want to talk about it?" I feel like it's a window into</p>
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●	Alice	Issues/ Conflicts	64	68	<p>But it's a beautiful place over there. And our place has become more and more beautiful the longer we've been allowed to stay, and the more we've planted. Yeah. Our place is so beautiful, I think. And I think it's gonna become more and more so as we are able to build our infrastructure and as our, as the prairie – you know, the prairie is gonna be so beautiful. And, yeah, I don't know. I mean, it's an interesting time, I guess. 'Cause I feel like we're at the, sort-of, this beginning of this farm and it has its whole life ahead of it. But the beginning of this terrible, like, climate, like, apocalypse. And we're trying to plant habitat for, like, these struggling species. And we're seeing things come, you know, but it's like, maybe these things are not going to be with us very long. I don't know. It's a really confusing, heartbreaking time. And again, it's like – why farm? Like, our weather's supposed to get more and more volatile. And it's just, like, gonna be so... It's, like, stressful to deal with the weather as so directly all the time. And to have everything dependent on the weather? Why would you want to be a farmer in the midst of climate change? And I'm like, "why would you want to be anything in the midst of climate change?" Our whole life is going to be precarious. Why not be in it with your eyes open? Right in the middle of it. At least I won't be able to pretend. And, like, well, we can't keep farming the way we are in the midst of climate change. We need people to be doing creative things with water. And we need plants on the soil. We need... yeah, we just, anyway... our farming's not going to be okay if we don't have, like, smart water management. I just feel like soil health is gonna, like ... I don't know, there's no way we're going to have a food system if we don't have soil health, and yeah, like, yeah fertilizer and irrigation. It's just like – I don't know. One, I just don't think they're going to be able to handle it. Like, I feel like, we are able to get by with soil – with irrigation and fertilizers because, like, well because we have tons of fossil fuels to use. And because here we have a really, like, lenient climate. But we're not going to be able to afford – I don't know. I don't know. Maybe financially we will be able to keep having cheap fossil fuels, like, forever.</p> <p>KR: ... we'll run out eventually (aside)</p> <p>A: like, I don't know. I just feel like – I wish we would run out really soon, so we'd have a better... I just feel like, I don't know, it's gotta ... I don't know. It's gonna destroy us from one side or the other and I just feel like we need to have some alternatives.</p> <p>KR: mmmhmm – and you are that.</p> <p>A: I know, that's what we're trying to do! But I feel like this also might destroy us one way or the other so...[laughter] I don't know if that's necessarily the model, like, "You too can grow food without fossil fuels... and irrigation... but you might go crazy." [laughter]</p>
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●	Alice	Issues/ Conflicts	96	96	<p>And maybe Nate should be doing that... maybe Nate should be talking to the man over there. It's this weird thing where I'm like – my husband is this crazy feminist – where he never wants to, like, you know, ever, like, have... you know, just super conscientious and I don't know... it's just, it's a weird culture and I don't want to buy into it – it's just sometimes I wonder if in some ways people would respect my husband less because... I don't know – one thing that was really nice – Nate worked for one of the neighbors who has a landscaping business and runs a number of farms – and Nate worked for one season and I thought it was a really great – partly because Nate doesn't know as many people in the neighborhood and he doesn't know that much about farming and I feel like all the guys that live out here – they grew up on farms, they know about machinery, they know about animals, they just know a lot of things – and we don't know any of those things, really. And, like, it's hard because I want to be like, well you don't respect me because I'm a woman... but I actually don't know anything about all these things – I don't know anything about all this tractor equipment and... I do know how to grow a lot of good food, but I don't know a lot of the things. So - you're kind of, like, rolling your eyes 'cause I'm upset that you're spraying my stuff – which is, I don't know... so it was nice because I feel like one - Nate got to know a bunch of people on a bunch of the farms and he got to learn about a lot of equipment and, like, he – the guy he worked for is really great – and, like, I feel like people really respect Nate when they know him. 'Cause he's just like a really good, honest, hard-working... Like, I feel like if you're a man you respect Nate because he has all the best man qualities and, like, all the best woman qualities – like, he's a really good guy – but he's not assertive. He's not out there making a show of himself. And I feel like, I sometimes worry that – people that don't know him, aren't going to respect him. You know and I don't want to like, keep him from having this, whatever this is- this rural male relationship that people have – like, I want him to have an opportunity to, like, talk to the farmer neighbors in away that, like, they're not going to talk to me. And, there's nothing I'm gonna be able to do – sure, I can have a ... I can negotiate with them about something and they're not gonna disrespect me, but they're not gonna be comfortable talking to me, like they're gonna be comfortable talking to another man-farmer. And I feel like, maybe I should let my husband do that so he can like, I don't know. I don't know! It's just weird, I guess.</p>
●	Alice	Issues/ Conflicts	98	98	<p>It is hard to be a farmer in Iowa because of the chemical spray. Seriously but I think, you know, I'm sure it's hard to be a farmer in California – it's hard to be a farm-worker in California – at least we don't spray our workers. Not that lowans don't, but our workers aren't getting sprayed on this farm.</p>



●	Alice	Issues/ Conflicts	101	106	<p>No, I mean, but when you're doing like the aerial and those things – you know – pesticide drift – you've got a hundred people picking in the field next to you. And, well just spraying – I don't see a hundred people picking out here.</p> <p>A: Yeah, that's amazing... yeah – but people live out here. Totally – people have children out here – that's what I'm just, I'm like ...</p> <p>KR: It's so awful, they're just ... yeah...</p> <p>A: How is it okay to spray poison from the sky... anywhere? Why is this? ... Not only is it okay, but it's like – you're right. And that like, if I am upset about it, I'm infringing on your private property right or something. I'm like, you're spraying out of an airplane – poison!</p> <p>KR: No, I think they're birds of the same feather ...</p> <p>A: yeah, anyway, I feel like that's the number one hard thing about being a farmer.</p>
●	Alice	Issues/ Conflicts	115	116	<p>At the co-op, that's right...</p> <p>A: I work eight hours a week in the summer, and I work si-fifteen hours a week in the winter. And then, Nate has been... Nate used to work full-time, until, like, a year-and-a-half ago, two years ago? Yeah. So, the goal is that the farm income should be able to pay for food and housing for all of the workers and that think, ideally, we would, like, have a higher quality of life sustained by our project... But people have needs like traveling, or chocolate, or right now, medical care, which I feel like is a hard one to have on the other side of that line. But, that, you need to have your own income to have... to be able to ... to do those things. So, yeah – alcohol. . . what are other things you want?</p>

●	Alice	Issues/ Conflicts	120	122	<p>I think we have a really good local community. I mean, I am sometimes puzzled by my church community, but I think that, I could be a better member of my church. And then, maybe my relationship with... I think that, yeah, I think that if I had a catastrophe – my church community would really be there for me.</p> <p>KR: And this is what church?</p> <p>A: This... well, so, my church has temporarily moved. There's a Catholic church about three miles away. And it's an awesome church – really it's a very active, very ... active church. And I think that if I was really involved in my church, I'd be really involved in my church. I would be, like... I think that, they are really active in the things that they do for each other, and for the church. And in a few outreach places that they've always done – like, I think that. And... yeah. They're very Catholic. I think I've tried to be like, "Let's get the youth group to, like, go do a service project." You know, or like, "come do a service overnight at our farm..." and the like, social justice learning thing. And they're like – "we're gonna go to Dubuque and visit, like, you know... holy places..." or I don't know – they're just – "we're gonna go visit the elderly" – they're great. You know, I was like, "let's do, like a, adult religious education class and let's do the Just Faith program." And like, you know – I don't know if you know the Just Faith program, but it's really really awesome curriculum about faith and justice. And they're like, "that's a great idea to do like a..." and then they're like, "well, the priest recommended this, like, seven weeks on, like, you know Catholicism basics..." or, like, whatever it was, I was like, "I have no interest in that." It's like, I don't want to learn about, like, the catechism. If you wanna learn about... Let's learn about, like, the social justice teachings of the Catholic Church! Like, they're super rich and amazing! But I don't want to learn about the sacraments. So, anyway, I could be a better member of my church. And I haven't even... so they moved their... they moved to Story City, so I can't walk to church. And I haven't been to church since they, their re-...like, they're doing a big construction thing on the church, so it's going to be like a year, I think, that my church is meeting seven miles away instead of three miles away. And that's a big... difference. So, not walking seven miles. And it starts at eight o'clock instead of eight thirty...</p>
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●	Alice	Issues/ Conflicts	145	146	<p>he didn't have a problem with every Catholic Worker House, he just didn't want it to be part of our name. And, so it's not, still it's not in our name, but we are now, like on... I mean, we were printing the Catholic Worker Farmer paper before we started our farm. So it wasn't like we weren't affiliated with the Catholic Worker movement – we were still like, but... anyway. But, he has a absolutely valid – and it was a - I think it was an important debate and it's still, it still is relevant. The word "catholic" if you're not Catholic... the word, "catholic" does not necessarily make you feel better. You know, "catholic" means "universal". I mean, you know it, it's - as word - it's not inherently offensive. But, that's not what anybody thinks – and maybe it is offensive because, like, the Catholic Church is Catholic 'cause they think they are the universal church.</p> <p>But, "catholic" with a small "c", means, like, including everyone. But, lots of people have perfectly valid reasons to not like the Catholic Church. And, you know, and the Catholic church has done terrible things in the past, and terrible things in the recent future and I'm sure is doing terrible things right now. And they have done them as individuals, as parishes, as priests, and as structurally – they've done terrible things. But, the Catholic church has also done amazing things throughout it's history and I think of the Catholic church as the people. Anyway, and the Catholic faith which I think is not perfect, but I think is much more exciting than the religious institution. Though, I have to say I'm a little [1:10:00] bit of a fan of our current Pope and I'm, like, really happy that we have a cool Pope that I feel like is doing a much better job of, well, being a Catholic [KR laughing], and of, like, of helping our church be better. So, I'm excited about that.</p>
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●	Alice	Issues/ Conflicts	157	159	<p>And, for people who have heard of the Catholic Worker movement, I feel like it's very helpful to us to be associated with them. Because – unless they've had a really terrible experience – but usually they have a really great experience. They know what it is that we're trying to do. They instantly understand a lot of what we're about. For all those other people – who don't know what it means, then, it's not very helpful – and sometimes counter-productive 'cause they think, "I don't want to hang out with Catholics" ... or... "I can't go there, I'm not Catholic" ... or</p> <p>KR: ... or "you're getting funds from the Catholic Church..." or... yeah.</p> <p>A: right – yeah. So, I think it's not without it's costs. I mean there's even Catholics that are like – there's definitely Catholics that are like – "I can't hang out with them – they're too radical, or they're always going to jail..." or, "they're, like, criticising our bishop." ... Definitely there's a lot of Catholic Workers who are doing those things... yeah, - I might do those things too if I wasn't... yeah, I dunno. If I felt like it was necessary. But, I feel like – I – there's no need for me to offend... conservative Catholics unless it's really important. [laughter].</p>
●	Alice	Issues/ Conflicts	167	167	<p>But I do think that, like, a real public awareness... I don't, again, it is kind of confusing to me. I feel like people can really know things and, like, choose to not care, or, like, have this degree of apathy, or hopelessness, where it doesn't matter, or they don't want to think about it... nothing's gonna change anyway. So, like, maybe it wouldn't make a difference, but I just feel like - I feel like a kindergarten class would obviously be able to say, "Wow, it's really bad to poison everything for thousands of acres and kill everything." ... like, that's their plan. That's their farming plan – "we're just gonna kill everything." Um, and that doesn't seem right.</p>
●	Alice	Issues/ Conflicts	168	168	<p>I feel like every church group should be able to be like, "That doesn't seem right... I don't think that was, like, God's plan for, like, our stewardship of creation." I feel like all these sixty-year-old farm-men, you know, if they were really, like, looking at that... would be like, "Does this give me joy?" "Is this what I love about my life as a farmer?" "Is this how I want to steward God's creation?" You know, would they go talk to their pastors and be like, "I feel so good about all the pesticides I use." I just don't know what it would take for people to be able to say, like, I don't... yeah, like, if it's legislation so that this is, like, everybody could see what's really happening, or like if it's actually, like, people actually getting in trouble and paying big fines, like, if it drifted and killed things.</p>

●	Alice	Issues/ Conflicts	169	170	<p>If it was actual good, you know, state of Iowa, like, investigation, and every time there was a report, if they came and were really seriously like, “we... this is not okay. We’re not gonna let this happen.” And like, “it’s not your responsibility farmer. Like, you told us about this, and like, it is our responsibility now to make sure that this doesn’t...” you know, like, this person doesn’t get off the hook. There will be a consequence for this. ‘Cause that’s not how it is right now. Anyway, I don’t know what it would take, it just seems like it shouldn’t... It just seems so ridiculous. And, yeah, I think everybody believes these stories. But, I don’t think they really believe them... like, I don’t know – like, this is the only way? Like, we’re feeding the world... the world relies on the Midwest to produce all this, like, horrible food... and fuel... And, you know, and we’re saving the world by destroying it...</p> <p>But it’s about dollars. I mean, a lot of these farmers it’s just about subsidies, and commodities, and equipment, and their motives are not pure, but often good. It’s like – “I want my kids to have a good education.” “I want my family to be comfortable.” You know, and it’s, I dunno, I just think it’s all so entrenched.</p>
●	Alice	Issues/ Conflicts	173	173	<p>What if it wasn’t true that you had to - for the rest of your life – work at some job - that you don’t love – in order to make a lot of money so that someday you’ll be happy? [laughter]... and secure! And you’re gonna be secure... ‘cause you’re not ever gonna be secure, and you could be happy today... Like, why... But, like, am I happy? Am I a good example? Like... “Look at me, I’m so happy...” [laughter]... But no! I’m, like, kind of stressed out and I’m trying to run this crazy farm... that like, everything’s broken and, you know, my workers don’t show up. And I don’t... I never know what’s gonna happen. So... There ya go...</p>
●	Alice	Issues/ Conflicts	191	191	<p>you know, like, they rarely come to any of our public events, or our discussions, or to our work days. And part of it is, maybe I’m not on top of it enough to get things in the bulletin on time – but even when things are there – like, we have big events and you know, nobody from my church comes. And like, they all know me, and yeah... It’s a little puzzling. But, I feel like, definitely... and I’ve spoken to a couple of the education classes. Like, the religious education classes. I would love it if some of the younger folks came out here and did like a work day or a overnight, like, I feel like would be really fun – like a camp out and sing some songs and, you know, go take some food to the food pantry and then like, talk about... I don’t know. Read about Jesus... I mean, I don’t know, but... yeah.</p>

●	Alice	Issues/ conflicts	192	192	Or even, another thing that is even more baffling – the college students in Ames who are part of the – that campus church – which we are also fairly connected to and how hard it is to get, like, a group of them to come to anything that we’re doing, or...I was going to go with them to the last – the Faith and Resistance Retreat that was in Des Moines - and then, when they found out... They thought that they were going to go to the Des Moines Catholic Worker to help the poor, and then they found out that actually the time they were scheduled to go was during the Faith and Resistance Retreat, and their youth leader was planning on them going to the Faith and Resistance Retreat but didn’t ... they didn’t really know that was what was going to happen – they all backed out. They’re like, “We don’t wanna talk about drones... and help the poor...” They were like, “We only wanna help the poor, but we don’t wanna talk about drones.” [laughter + KR: oookay...] So, anyway. I don’t know. . . Maybe if I was more charismatic, or more organized, or had more time some of these connections would be stronger. But...
●	Louise2	Issues/ conflicts	14	14	And with the native trees, it just, I fully realized that man came and they, in a sense, developed this land. It’s like building a housing development or something. They said, which is what we would do in modern-day, but they... man came and they said, “I can use this for this, and that for that, and it’s all for me.” But there were plants that were here that developed before anybody else was here, before any people were here. And so it’s really kind of like God’s garden. And it just seems like we really ought to try and preserve that. And delicate soil very lacking in organic matter. It is easily abused.
●	Louise2	Issues/ conflicts	17	17	That that was Moa fern. It’s just, it’s like a link to the past. And what really belongs here. The climate is such that you can grow almost anything here. But to try to preserve some of the plants that, just, that God planted, and they’re in danger because of all the stuff that man has done to this land. that idea just grabbed us, and we said, “Oh, that would be really nice if we could have more native plants.” And we had no idea how many there were, where they would grow, who should be here.
●	Louise2	Issues/ conflicts	36	36	Bob takes care of the weed control. We have, before we got here full-time, our farm manager was using round up everywhere. The ground was black, everywhere. When we came, we said, “Ramon, we don’t want you using that anymore. We don’t think it’s healthy for you to be using it first of all, and we don’t want to live where it’s used.” So we stopped all of that herbicide usage. The only place we use herbicide is along the fence line, because the growth along the fence will cause it to rust. And, so that’s the reason, if the fence was covered and it didn’t do anything to it, that would be okay, but it’s not. It’ll cause it to rust in this environment. And then we’d have the pigs back. So, we check on the fence line about once a month.

●	Louise2	Issues/ conflicts	42	42	I find that when you're growing food, I feel very responsible for it being used. And that's really... food waste drives me crazy. And it's true the wild turkey's will eat the avocados. They go on the ground and that just happens sometimes. That happens a lot, still what I want to do is establish, not a market, for that extra produce - but a place that needs it, like the food bank, or the schools or whatever. The thing is that you have to deal with all the safe food rules with that and it's you know like, "gah – didn't you ever eat an acorn as a kid? What?"
●	Louise2	Issues/ conflicts	53	55	It's for the coffee berry borer.  KR: Right, okay.  L: So, it's a fungus that is sprayed on the trees in a water solution – lots of water – a small bit of fungus. And it's the only thing that will save our crop now. It's all over the world. We were the last place to become infested with it. And there... the fungus that we're using is also native to this area, but that fungus died because of a prolonged drought. So this season, is... I'm not expecting it to be great, because of the drought. It gives the...it kills our native resident fungus. There's also another beetle that actually will attack the coffee berry borer. And they came, NRCS came, and... or actually it was the extension service from the University of Hawaii, came, and surveyed our land and said, "yes, we found that beetle on your land."
●	Louise2	Issues/ conflicts	75	75	in Hawaii, there were - there was only one mammal before man came – it was a bat! And that was the only... there were the dolphins in the sea, but on the land just the bat. There were no undulates. There were... So it was just the birds, and the bat, and a couple of butterflies. And so man has brought many many animals here.
●	Louise2	Issues/ conflicts	88	88	my social group used to be the Kona Coffee Farmer's Association. I volunteered every year at their events even when I was just staying a short time at the farm. Only I got worn out on the board. For two (2) years I was the Membership Chair and I just said, "I can't handle this anymore. I am spending way too much time on my computer doing this membership thing." And I just, I decided to take a break from that because I wanted to paint. And I couldn't do it all. So, it was interesting getting involved in a non-profit that was really business oriented

●	Louise2	Issues/ conflicts	90	91	<p>And the village down there – two (2) sections of it. One (1), where the ladies in the book club live – the Anglo section; and there’s the native Hawaiian historic village. That village is actually – the naming song for the village of Milolii was recorded by Iz - and it’s “La ‘Ilima”. We have an’ilima plantgrowing out behind the house, but it’s the naming song for that village and is about how a tsunami came in but nobody was hurt.</p> <p>And people said to us, the people in the new development, they tend to diss the people in the village; some of them do. It’s like, it’s that classic thing – “these are the new guys, we can do it better than they can, they have drug problems... we don’t have any of those problems.” [under her breath] oh, yeah right... So you hear that cross-talk, for instance “you don’t want to hang out in that village,” and “you don’t want to leave your car there,” and “you oughta be careful down there.” And we went down there, and we found that if we recognized people, if we didn’t pretend that those people weren’t there, they were welcoming to us. And so we have a friend, I don’t even know his name, but he’s along the walk to the beach that we go to. And we always, I always make sure that we say, “hi” to him, if he’s out. And it’s lovely to be recognized as a person. That’s all anybody needs – is to be recognized as a person. “I see you.” And, we don’t have any problems down there, and we just, we... you take, you know, I don’t, I’m sure that they don’t even know that we’re the ones who bring extra produce down there. It’s not about that. It’s about saying, “I see you.” And they have a lending library down there, which is, actually, most of it’s in Hawaiian. And it’s a biology library. It’s about the ocean, and about the land. For a while they had an internet charter school down there. But it didn’t last too long, but we would always go and talk to those folks, and if somebodies down there at the pavilion, or therecampers there, and we bring food down, we’d go over and say, “we brought avocados down, go ahead and help yourself.” You know, so it’s just to me, it’s so important to recognize people. That’s a... I see a thread there, recognize the plant – recognize the people...</p>
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●	Louise2	Issues/ conflicts	105	107	<p>NRCS does not think there are enough. Especially young women. It's mostly us retired women who are the farmers. And I remember going in there one day and Mary Robbleegoing, "So, how old are you?" And I said, you know, it was probably something like, "66..." And she said, "Augh. (sound of fist hitting table) Darn!" (laughter) And it's like you know... It's like, they're looking for young women! And we do have... - Yay rain! (sound of loud rain in the background) – We do have programs here to try to encourage women to go into college study or...</p> <p>KR: Ag studies...</p> <p>L: Ag studies, yeah. And our county agent is a woman. And most of the NRCS people are women. (whispers "Guys are kinda duds;" KR responds, I won't tell...laughter) They, so there, I think there's a big female presence. Their lament is that it's us older women, and not the younger women. We have a lot of... the farmer's union just got active about two (2) years ago. I was one of the firstmembers in that union. Haven't renewed because it's so Maui-centric.</p>
●	Louise2	Issues/ conflicts	115	115	<p>I've heard stories of coffee whores. Actual prostitutes that... gangs of prostitutes that come in when there's a big coffee picking. That's not gonna happen on this spot. It's not, you know, first of all, they're not gonna find this farm. The farm's not big enough. You know, so... That happens on the really big farms. And I don't even know if it's just legend or not. Actually. I don't know if it's really true.</p>
●	Louise2	Issues/ conflicts	129	129	<p>At this point in time. We are Lutherans. And we've learned that we really are Lutherans. For Bob and I, we will often go to church in Volcano National Park, by ourselves, rather than going to town to the church. We kind of flow back and forth in those two (2) realms. It turns out for us – Bob being really a very private person, that the reason that we will go to church is more mystical. The liturgy provides a mystical feed for us. And that same mystical feed exists in the nature. And, and for me at this point in time, it's more strongly in the nature. Some... a lot of people go for community. That's one of the reasons for organized church. And we have not found that community – in the congregations here. And the problem is the distance. Almost more than anything. And, there are other things too. But one can be inside a community... I... gosh, they're not connected. That going to that community and being a part of this community is disjointed.</p>

●	Louise2	Issues/ conflicts	130	130	It was an amazing ministry. Because, you... you can be welcoming to these people. But there are people in the congregation who object to that ministry. Because they were like, "we don't want felons here." And we were like, "No, no. The felons are not here, okay? They're just on the screen... This is the poor family that can't afford to go and see their relatives on the mainland..." I mean, nobody could afford to do that, right? So, we are taking care of the prisoners and their families, and we should be welcoming. I mean, when I first started going the other volunteers were treating them like they were criminals.
●	Louise2	Issues/ conflicts	132	132	But, I was able to talk to them – to talk to the volunteers – and say, "you know..." and I don't even remember what I said, but we turned it around. And we became more welcoming. And it was such a blessing. And the people really responded to it. And see, here's the hard thing... We were set-up to treat them like criminals. Because you have to show your I.D. You have to prove that you're the person on the list – who is the allowed visitor. And sometimes you have to turn people away – because they're not on the list. And you have to cover for the inadequacies of bureaucracy that doesn't make everything clear. But, for a while it was really cute. You know, like, if we were running late, we'd call the next person on the list. So, then they would have my cell phone number, so the next month they'd be calling me. And I'm like... "I'm really sorry, but I'm not there yet." You know and it's like... so, it... that – somehow the checking of the I.D. made people feel like they were a closed door, rather than an open door. And, what I suggested – I remember now – what I suggested was – ok, they have to show us their I.D. So, the way to make this welcoming is that we should wear name tags – 'cause then it's not so one-sided. You know, it's like, "I'm asking you who you are, and you need to prove it... Here's who I am." So that it's a more equal exchange. And that really worked. And it, and I said, "No, really, this is hard for them. And we need to be the place – the people – the grease – that makes it easier." So, we worked through that and it really worked well. And we got better and better at it. And then, other people in the congregation ran the minister off and Bob and I were like, "Okay, we're done!" you know, "We're just done!" "This is too painful." So, um, we're working back towards that.
●	Louise2	Issues/ conflicts	136	136	That story has to do more with community grief than anything else. And also how isolated we are here. So, in a congregation here – in a faith community – you have people who come and go. You have two services during the winter – while the visiting congregation is here – the snowbirds – and they're all retired. We have three (3) children in that congregation. In the Episcopal congregation – we have one (1) child. So – aging congregations. Not the young families. Very, very different from your description of Los Angeles. And, so, it's... I keep trying to put that together – but it's hard. It's hard. Yeah – yeah, that's all I can say about that.

●	Louise2	Issues/ conflicts\ Moving/land issues	141	142	<p>I actually see the transience of the population as being an issue. I think it's normal in a place where people think you're going to basically live in a Hawaiian paradise, and people find out that it's not what they expected it to be. So I - and this is interesting - I see a difference between men and women - and their approach to this place. And this might surprise you. There are, well, shouldn't... There are many men who want to come and live on the land. The mac nut farm that we put an offer on had caused a divorce in that man's life because his wife wanted to be where the good schools were for the kids and he was just consumed by the land. He wanted to grow his vegetables and be off the grid, and so he would come down south by himself. And it eventually contributed to the end of their marriage. And he moved off-island because he had met a new woman who wanted to live in Washington state.</p> <p>So, I often see that couple division. And, the next farm down was the same thing. The man loved the land. And the woman said, "No. I want to be able to shop." And that's one problem that I see that (2:33-2:47 phone rang - Louise paused to let it ring)... So, in my experience it's usually the women who want to be on the land, and I've noticed that difference here. And maybe it's just because when couples come here it makes them very isolated from the rest of their family; if the family's not here. And I have actually heard that story over and over again. My friend Mary-Lou - she got really into the coffee farming. She was really big at it. But, she really wanted to move back to the mainland, because she wanted to be able to shop, they want to urban setting. But, so I've seen that difference. This place, maybe it's not what you thought it would be. And for some people - it's not what they need. And it tends to either split couples up or make people sell.</p>
●	Louise2	Issues/ conflicts	143	143	The other issue is the non-availability of good medical facilities because this is a very rural island - and very poor. So the doctors - it's hard to keep doctors here.
●	Louise2	Issues/ conflicts	143	143	Drugs are an issue on the island. And they're not so much an issue on the farm, but when you're in an isolated rural area, you can expect to... There have been thefts - but nothing big, nothing huge - it's like a weed whacker here; stuff being stolen to be sold on the black market for drug money. In this area - I feel very safe in this area - but there are other sections that there are problems like that.
●	Louise2	Issues/ conflicts	146	146	with the church for us, that is the kind of problem with the church - it is that it is too far away. There is not one that brings us closer to God within an easy commute. And that's why we kind of switch off on either just going to be alone in the forest with God, and pray that way. And Bob is especially good with that. He can... he really can hike and pray at the same time. I need my kneeler - my quiet place to be still. Because I get too, I sometimes get too sidetracked by the movement.

●	Louise2	Issues/ conflicts	147	147	<p>this is a very development oriented government here in Hawaii. And the farmers are very frustrated by the Oahu being the seat of government – which is not where most of the food is grown, and it is not the place – Maui and the Big Island, Kauai are far more active in farm-to-home food movements in “One Island, One Canoe”... we’re all in it together, we need to be buying local – because we could clearly grow all the food we need on these islands. And yet, our supermarkets – like Safe Way – they do have stuff that’s labeled “local”, but it’s mostly imported from other places. The fact that you can buy imported bananas, and everybody else is trying to give their bananas away, is just absolutely ludicrous. But we do have the food movements. Hopefully they will go forward, but the legislature does not listen to us. They do not go along with the idea of origin, the idea of truth in labeling, because they are captive to the big corporations – to Monsanto – they’re definitely captive to that. And they feel that that’s where the economic future of the island is. Which is so unfortunate.</p>
●	Louise2	Issues/ conflicts\ Moving/land issues	148	149	<p>Our controversy with native Hawaiians – in terms of them being pretty angry of the fact that Anglos came and they feel they lost most of their populations to our diseases. And then they lost most of their land because their rulers sold them out. But they don’t really see it that way. It is that they were just dealt out – by the Anglos that came in.</p> <p>And the fact that we could have a major new telescope up on Mauna Kea but the native Hawaiian community was able – a year ago started a huge movement to stop the construction of that. That’s kind of a problem. There’s a tension between – “We want it to be the way it was 200 years ago,” and, “everything would be fine if it was like that.” And the truth is, you can’t go back in terms of... they want a sovereign nation. And they don’t have the recognition as a sovereign people the way the American Indians do in terms of federal congress. So, that’s a tension on the island. And they are one of the biggest proponents of what we want to do, which is perpetuate the native species. So, we do have contact with them, and we try to be supportive with them, but that’s a real tension in our lives – How do you make sure that they’re taken care of as a native people and that other people are also taken care of. And mostly, it’s that anger doesn’t exist between us. That’s the hardest thing to live with. You don’t want to feel that there are two social groups that are really in high contention.</p>

●	Louise2	Issues/ conflicts	153	153	I think it would probably be the native-Anglo divisions. I've lived in a tri-cultural state for 40 years. Most of my adulthood in New Mexico. We have the Hispanics, the Indians, and the Anglos. And there needs to be a way to be tolerant and respectful and I feel that a lot of the Anglos who come here are not respectful. I hear a lot of bad-mouthing. It really hurts me when I hear that. It's like, "have you no compassion for this group?" And it's also true for the other labor forces. We have Filipinos. This is a big melting pot. But it doesn't melt gently in the high schools. We have many Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, Tong - I don't even know where they're from - and the native Hawaiians. And so, like any other, the pecking order is huge amongst the adolescents and we have the Marshallese. And the treatment and the gossip about the Marshallese is the hardest for me to actually deal with. It came up in one of our churches. And people just gossip about them.
●	Louise2	Issues/ conflicts	155	155	The United States used the Marshall Islands for Nuclear Bomb testing and they had an accident and they polluted the islands.

●	Louise2	Issues/ conflicts	157	161	<p>so Marshall Islanders are granted perpetual right to live and work in the United States. They can emigrate here. And some of them had to leave their island. Since it's a group of islands not everybody lives on the polluted ones. But the fact that their society is very very different from ours. It's very striated. It's a caste system. You have chiefs who tell the people what they're going to do and who really guide these small communities. So, the Marshall Islanders – they're in Arkansas, they're in Wisconsin, but they here in Hawaii too. And this is closest to their natural lands. So they come and they stay as their own, insular, community. And they try to get jobs to support families. It's very difficult. Actually the Marshall Islands now are in really good shape, but these outlying communities are just really seen as outsiders, and people spread rumors about them like, "Oh they don't know how to use the bathroom," and "they don't wear underwear," and "they smear feces on the inside of restrooms." And, I don't know if any of that is true, because I've heard people say a lot of things here that are not true. So, it is really identifying that group as sub-human, and that is so wrong. And it hurts me. It hurts me as a member of the Anglo community to hear people talk about that.</p> <p>At the Episcopal church that we attended, the Marshall Islanders used our parish hall as their worship space in the afternoon. So what people would say was, "Oh, well, it's not our Marshall Island group, it's the others that are bad." So, it is very much like the racism on the mainland. With any minority group, and that is just so hard to see. And people – my own farm manager – he won't hire a Marshall Islander to be part of his picking group. Because they're... they have a different work ethic. They kind of hang out. And it was the Marshall Islanders' pickers that turned in the big farms for not paying them minimum wage. Well, they had a perfect right to do that. Because they were being exploited. So, that kind of tension – it's the normal American thing – it's the minority groups and each minority group tries not to be the one on the very bottom. It's so classic. But, in this small space, it's just very visible. And that... it's the same with the Filipino's – we don't have as many of them now, since the terrorist attacks. It's more difficult for a Filipino to come here – because they're a Muslim country, basically. And so, you know, dealing with the tension of that stuff is sad.</p> <p>That turtle over there is a Marshall Island weaving – because two years ago – the year before - the Pastor's wife had organized a Christmas Eve party for the Marshall Island congregation at our church. And they came and sang at the – and they're, they're amazing musicians! – And they came and sang at the Christmas Eve Service and we put on this Christmas party for them. And there were stacks of presents for all the children. And the next year, she was going on - her husband was going on - sabbatical and so they were not going to be there for the planning period. And I said, "Pam, how can I help you? How can I help you to get this Christmas Party together? What can I do while you're away? And the next thing I knew, in the bulletin it said, "and Louise is in charge of the Marshall Island Christmas Party."</p>
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KR: Oh, great.

L: So, I said, "Okay, I opened my mouth; I'll do it." And it was wonderful. It was fabulous. But I made sure that when they came back, I was kind of invisible and Pam helped the Marshall Island pastor give the presents out. I said, "I don't... my thing is that I do it in the background. I don't want to be the person up front." And it was probably the best Christmas Eve I've ever had and the kids were so appreciative. And so were the women. We had lots of second-hand gifts for the women of household goods, and clothing and stuff. They took it all. It was really great for them. But it's a very different society. And I think that there's room for all of us in this canoe. And so that kind of tension is... so in other words, I've had good interactions but then I've also heard gossip behind it and it's just really hurtful.

●	Louise2	Issues/ conflicts	165	165	that transient population has no idea of the rumblings or of the other things, 'cause they, they're just gonna come to the worship service.
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●	Louise2	Issues/ conflicts	165	165	The problem with the Episcopal church is the church was established by the Greenwell family. Most of the graves in the cemetery are Greenwell graves. So, the one Greenwell who still actually attends is like, "This is my grandfather's church." Okay, so I should have the most say in what we do and how things happen here. So, nobody that comes from the outside can possibly be an influential person here. It's like stepping into an old English church, you know, and the major landowner is gonna be the head of the congregation. (laughter)
●	Louise2	Issues/ conflicts	165	165	so is mostly the people that had grown up in that church that were the gossipy and, "we gotta get rid of this pastor." The people on this island are always trying to get rid of their pastors! I don't understand it! I'm like, "Whoa!" you know, that is just so different,
●	Louise2	Issues/ conflicts	165	166	<p>it is the hardcore islanders verses the new people. So that is part of the transient thing. It's like we come in as a new person and they're like, "Oh, no no no, you will learn in time how it is here on this island."</p> <p>And so, yeah, it's kind of like, it's hard for newbies to come in and, but they... you know. I think the Lutheran church is gonna be fine. They love Bob. He built them a beautiful Pascal candle stand at the request of one of the pastors. And they think he's terrific. And that's really nice. And as I said the prison ministry was successful for me. So, um, I guess just being myself is probably the advocacy that I need rather than running away. And sometimes you just have to run away for your own preservation.</p>



●	Louise2	Issues/ conflicts	168	168	<p>We had a native Hawaiian couple – and when you say, “Native Hawaiian” that might be one tenth Hawaiian, or it might be half Hawaiian, because there was a lot of intermarriage. Most... pure native Hawaiians are extremely rare. But, we had a native Hawaiian couple. She was a Hala weaver, and he was Robbie; just he’s this eccentric great guy. And he’ll tell you his heritage is Scottish, Boston, Hawaiian, Portuguese – you know, all over the map. But the church wanted to re-do the garden, around the church. And these two native Hawaiian people said, “We ought to plant -native plants! We could plant dry-land Taro here. We could plant native shrubs.” And the pastor who came from Alaska, and before that, Maine, said, “No, no, we need to have these other things here; that are easy to take care of and that are...you know...” and so there is that... Robbie actually left the church. I actually heard people in the middle of that church stand up in the middle of the sermon and say, “That’s it! I’m outta here!” And walk out the back door. Because of what was being said in the sermon. It was, it was so amazing! and I have heard parishioners heckle the pastor, during the sermon. And say, “That might be okay with you, but it’s not okay with me!” In the middle of the... where you have people... tourists – visiting! It’s almost like, I would hope I would hear, “Amen!” “Alleluia!” Not, “I’m outta here!” So, but that was Robbie, standing up for his truth. And it is... and what the pastor said was, “I’m glad you feel free to express yourself.” But they’re always trying to run that pastor out on a rail. It’s amazing. And it’s not gracefilled. But... so, I’ve seen that tension within the groups. The truth is, if you live on this island for a long time, for some reason people need to feel that they know all the answers and that when newcomers come they don’t understand. And, in the churches part of it is that it’s very expensive to bring a pastor here. You know the normal thing is somebody comes for an interview. Well, that’s not 200 bucks for your mileage. That’s 1200 (twelve hundred) for your plane ticket. And so they tend to hire the first person that comes because they don’t want to double up on that \$1200 expense. And then, once the pastor gets here and they’re not really the pastor they need, they try and get rid of ‘em. Because they’re angry that they paid so much money to get ‘em here. And it’s not the right person – so that’s actually what I’ve seen over and over again. Don’t want an outsider. We want someone who understands the culture here. We want someone who will just listen to us, and just... we don’t want a leader. We want a follower. And because we know what we need. And we know how to do it. And I think that’s the most uncomfortable thing for Bob and I, because, what we look for is that mystical experience. And Bob looks for a sermon that really brings him closer to God and that inspires him to think throughout the week. And so we’re not looking for the... we’re not looking for that same arrangement that these other people are. We’re just gonna quietly go away and... yeah. So that’s been the tension with the congregations here.</p>
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●	Louise2	Issues/ conflicts	172	176	<p>That's what happens when a retired high school principal becomes a priest. Okay</p> <p>(both laugh)</p> <p>L: They are not used to operating by committee. They are the boss.</p> <p>KR: Yeah, that's very true.</p> <p>L: And, he came to a congregation full of high schoolers, who were not willing to stay there.</p>
●	Louise2	Issues/ conflicts	180	181	<p>To my knowledge, there is no support of the farming community. There are congregations – which I have not attended – we do have Hispanic congregations. We could say that the Episcopal priest offering the building – in exchange for janitorial services, I didn't say that, but – that the Marshallese are supported in that way by being given a place to worship. The priest found it very difficult to deal with the neighbors after that. Because they complained about the Marshallese music, they complained that the services went on too long. I think that we're in an era of non-tolerance of congregations... And here everything is very close, and it's true that sound travels here – unbelievably – I mean, we can ever tell where the sound is actually coming from.</p> <p>So, the neighbors around the Lutheran church really resent the fact that the church is there. They don't like the people driving through their neighborhood to get to it. They're the ones, I suspect who want us to have a closed and locked gate when we are not there, using the building. They don't like evening services, evening meetings. Because, to them – this is my residential neighborhood – but you can only build in certain areas on this island, and in truth a church was there before the housing development. But it's, that is, it's a small place. So you're gonna have this close interaction.</p>
●	Louise2	Issues/ conflicts	181	181	<p>The high school is up above the Episcopal church and they have trouble with vandalism by the high school students. The pastor's truck was stolen two days after Christmas out of the parking lot. Well... he left his keys in the ignition. He came from Alaska – that's what you always did – if somebody needed your vehicle more than you did you assumed that they really needed it. Well, you can't do that in... at this urban area...where... with a brand new red Toyota pickup. Never to be seen again. You know, so there's that tension of the church buildings being inside of this community. And we all thought that's how it was supposed to be, right? The church was supposed to be the gathering point for the community.</p>

●	Louise2	Issues/ conflicts	186	186	And talk about just farming. Weird things happen. Like, the USDA produces their farmer, their farm worker rights posters – in English – initially. And so, then they said, “We’re going to add Filipino, and Tong language posters.” And we’re like, “All of our workers are Hispanic! What are you talking about? Where are you coming from?” Well, they’re coming from Oahu. So, the island hop problem is a big problem in terms of suiting it to the place. ‘Cause each island is actually different. But, all of the decisions are pretty much made on Oahu. And we’re like, “Oh, great!... Tong... where are they?” And so, yeah, it’s been pretty interesting
●	Louise2	Issues/ conflicts	197	197	It seems like there’s kind of a thread of – “That’s the way we’ve always done it.” Whether it’s the church or the farmers or ...
●	Amber2	Issues/ conflicts	8	8	I was interviewing out in New York and I’m looking at people and they always said, “Do you have a question” and it’s like, “Do you like your job?” It was always the question I wanted to likeaskthem because they could tell me all the reasons I should like this job or shouldn’t, but I don’t think they really were happy. And that was striking to me.
●	Amber2	Issues/ conflicts	8	8	So I felt pretty confident actually that was God’s will that I was supposed to be here. Um, and then when it kept going on and on, I was like, “really?” (laughs heartily). “No plan B, huh?” But, it’s been, it’s been good. So I think what I’ve learned over now I’ve been here 15 years and I’ve walked faithfully beside my mom in it and honored her and God. God has faithfully walked with me in it. I mean, I’ve learned, I’ve learned so much. Like I said now I don’t know as I start to think about who I am outside of the farm, it’s hard for me to separate because so many of my lessons are so tied here. Um, but I do think that everything I’ve learned here can be used in ministry...
●	Amber2	Issues/ conflicts\ Moving/land issues	10	10	and you know the bigger family, the bigger farm, so I’m sensing that but I don’t know what to do. So I think I’m just at a place of um, (pause) I’m seeing the beauty of the past and then seeing some movement of the future. But I want the farm to succeed, you know it’s just I don’t think I’m as necessary here anymore. And that’s okay.
●	Amber2	Issues/ conflicts\ Moving/land issues	18	18	There’s so many voices telling me not to love my roots. Even within the Christian church.
●	Amber2	Issues/ conflicts	20	21	I mean, you know just it’s, it’s something out there as opposed to worshipping Jesus here.  K: Right. You have to go somewhere else to do it.

●	Amber2	Issues/ conflicts	22	22	Yeah. And Jesus used the natural world all the time in his parables and he looked at life around him. Look at the sparrow; look at the wild flowers. So I think Jesus gives you permission to be contemplative. The world doesn't necessarily give that to you and that space, but it almost feels like you have to defend yourself sometimes and be like, "I am doing something. I'm contemplating!" (hearty laughter) You know like, "Oh okay, honey." It's like..oooh. So I think that's where I am right now as far as, but definitely, faith has been huge, a huge part of seeing the beauty of this place and embracing it. You know I was kind of born into the story, but I've had to grow into it. And in a different way than if I made the choice, "Hey this is gonna be my family. I'm gonna go get married. I'm gonna..." you know I feel like I never had that and God's actually giving that to me now and saying, "you get to choose." Where Christ has kind of chosen for me for a lot of years and I'm okay with that. That was His plan and um, I'm walking through. Okay good. That was long. Influences.
●	Amber2	Issues/ conflicts	50	50	Even though we are greedy by nature and doing everything we can to destroy each other and the land, God is still so gracious in holding us together.
●	Amber2	Issues/ conflicts	76	76	So I think a lot of times as you start going horizontal in comparing, I just don't feel much value in it because it's so different how you farm, how many animals you farm, whether you consider cows, breeding to be more important or how you feed or how much labor you have. We were always pretty short on labor so we just did it and had to do it. Um, mom was always very respected. I mean I know at times you know I'm sure it was more boys club, but she never really cared.
●	Amber2	Issues/ conflicts	78	78	So I never learned that from her to be slighted
●	Amber2	Issues/ conflicts	86	86	You don't have to be the one fighting and you know striving and I see that in agriculture. You know um, it always seems like, well why would you do that, why would you reach for that extra. I mean you have daily bread, but again, it's not may place to look there and judge only with exception of how does this apply to my relationship with God and what our steward is. But yeah, I, again, but I don't think I think about it very much. Maybe because I just was born into it. We were just like, we are women in ouragri-culture whether people like it or not, (funnier, little sarcastic tone with laughing here) we didn't really want to be so put that in your pipe and smoke it. You know I don't know. Yeah Okay.
●	Amber2	Issues/ conflicts	100	100	Our church is a very, has an urban feel to it. Sometimes I feel like it becomes more of a corporate business model in the church than family and I've worked in the corporate world and I've worked in family business.

●	Amber2	Issues/ conflicts	102	102	So I think it's a little bit of a philosophy on how you're gonna first of within the church how you're gonna approach? Are you more of a grassroots church where you're saying, "This is who we are, this is where are, this is who we start growing out and start moving in." As opposed to "This is the structure that we're going to put in to it." And I do think, I'm not trying to be critical of the church I go to because I think that's how they started. Now they're 3,000, 6,000 people depending on you know. It's just different. And so the way they have to structure themselves is different. They try to still use small groups and feed in, but it just, it loses something. It just loses something.
●	Amber2	Issues/ conflicts	103	104	Right, when it's that big.  A: Um, so you know it's kind of the same tension with agriculture. It's not different.
●	Amber2	Issues/ conflicts	106	106	You know how big can you, how big can you be and still have humanity and still be looking people in the eye and, and um, those sorts of things. So the questions aren't that different. It's just that you're not forced to submit to them in the church where here I was forced to come in and wrestle with it and struggle
●	Amber2	Issues/ conflicts	106	106	I say, "Do you think that pleases Jesus Christ?" To have us all in our little corners. I don't think so! You know read the Bible! (Last two sentences, voice gets more intense and passionate) The music becomes very much, and I, so, I get passionate about that, because I mean yes, music is a wonderful expression and it's meant to deeply imbed truth in us and carry it with us. It's not the main point. How you do that. And I think we just get, we get off you know where, how do we grow in our depth with Jesus in this society? I mean that's the question. The farm naturally slows you down and humbles you, but then I also know that there's that tension, um, that some people God really has called to be on the frontier and pushing that, so I guess maybe, maybe it's more on the discipleship side of it and understanding outreach will happen, but maybe it's being that consistent place that's inviting people in and caring for them and tending for them. Now that should be happening. Is it happening? I don't know. And it's probably not gonna be on a big scale. I can't talk, I can't talk to three people the same way I talk to one person.
●	Amber2	Issues/ conflicts	108	108	I mean that's a small dynamic. I can't talk to 30 people the way I talk to 3 people. I don't know how to you know and everybody's saying that can be bypassed now. But I think some people's souls says, "No, that can't be bypassed." Somebody needs to be looking you in the eye and it can't be necessarily through a computer screen. Maybe it can be, but... you know I guess for me technology can maintain a relationship, it can't start it, it can't root it, it can't you know there's things it can't do. Okay let's think. I think there's the parallels. I think that's what I'm pulling out of this, is understanding there's life beyond the farm, but what happens here is important.

●	Amber2	Issues/ conflicts	162	162	I think we have too many ideas and not enough you know, hands on type things, but how do you, people are so busy and there's so much going on, how do you break..
●	Judy2	Issues/ conflicts	7	7	I grew up on a farm so, and I guess I would've had to go out and get a job. Where I was always here for the kids. I mean when they came home from school or whatever, I was always here for them and then when I saw the two older ones take the three wheeler down the lane after he died, I was like, "Yeaharen't not going." You know people tell you, yeah you know, even my dad said, "You can't do this honey," [said very gently in her retelling] he said, you know and I said, "Yeah, we're gonna try."
●	Judy2	Issues/ conflicts	43	43	Because your kids coming out from the city ya knowthey realizethe milkthey're drinking is from a clean farm because that's what they worry about –is that it's dirty, the bacteria and the germs and whatever. (laughs) It's like no. It can't. [She meant people come to the farm thinking it will be dirty but its not allowed to be dirty]
●	Judy2	Issues/ conflicts	60	64	<p>We don't really have a vet very much because they go out in the pasture. I mean they're not stuck in a barn so we don't have a lot of health issues with them. We don't vaccinate anymore. We don't do any of this stuff anymore. It's just kind of let them be who they are.</p> <p>K: Yeah and what changed in that over that passage of time?</p> <p>J:Um, I think it's just that it was a pain catching these animals to try to do this. (laughter) They weren't happy and we weren't happy so we just said "eh". We don't sell. We're a closed herd which makes a difference. If we were buying and selling then that would be completely different, but we're just a closed herd.</p> <p>K: Oh okay. What's the difference?</p> <p>J: If you're buying other animals, bringing other animals in or yourselling these, then you'd have to have that done. You'd have to be vaccinated. Where they're just all here. I mean eventually they come from calves to heifers to, into our milking herd and then from there if they don't make it then they go out.</p>

●	Judy2	Issues/ conflicts	66	66	All here. We don't sell. We don't sell anything so then we don't have to. And dipping, we used to dip and then we found out that the teets got chapped and then they'd kick at you when you washed them for the next time. And it's like, "why are we doing this?" We stopped and our somatic cell count is probably better than it was back then. So I don't know. So it's just things that you just do or don't do that you know you find our they're fine, they're fine that way. And our fieldman Al Philabeck said actually a lot of farmers are going that route. You know if it's a closed herd like that they are getting away from the vaccinations and that type of thing so. And it's neither right or wrong. If they want to do it that's fine. But we just said "eh, it's not worth it." Make it simple.
●	Judy2	Issues /conflicts	100	100	Ohhh I don't really see a whole lot. You know like your large dairies, they're so regulated. We have a lot of them around and people are concerned about them, but I don't know, I don't see much problem with them. Again, we don't worry about what they do, they don't worry about what we do, so ...
●	Judy2	Issues/ conflicts\ Moving/land issues	102	102	And everything there, they're under so many rules and restrictions and things that um, they do a great job. You know and as far as people saying oh yeah these big ones are running these small ones out – no, they're not doing that. I mean they're not running us out. We're fine. You know and our farm is debt free so maybe we're in a different place than maybe some are too, some small family farms.
●	Judy2	Issues/ conflicts\ Moving/land issues	104	104	Yeah it'd be a lot harder maybe and now milk prices are down and stuff you know, it'd be hard if had a big debt load and stuff too. Which we did years ago when we just started out. I mean when John was putting this farm together we had a huge debt load. You know but God just provided and it's like, yeah, all of a sudden it's all paid for and many years already too, so... and he had to die to do that, which wasn't good (she laughs a little). You know he had a nice life insurance policy that helped pay for a chunk of land...but it's like yeah, that wasn't always good.
●	Judy2	Issues/ conflicts	118	118	Because we, our church is so big that I think it's hard. I mean like yours is smaller so you can do that more so I think. And even when we were at St. Peter's probably, I mean everybody knew who we were and everybody knew they were welcome but at the same time but you don't work that much with them.
●	Judy2	Issues/ conflicts	119	120	What would that look like in a dream world of the church partnering with you more or however you wanna understand that?  J: I don't think we could, not in our big regional church that we have. I don't know how we could do it. Cause that's a whole different venue than you know your smaller churches. Cause like even in Forest Junction, I can remember I grew up in a church with only a couple hundred people and it's just a whole different thing.

●	Judy2	Issues/ conflicts	122	122	You always have people say to you, “if you need some help, just give us a call” you know, but we don’t so we don’t do it. But I mean people are willing to come. I mean there have been a lot of people through the years that have said, even this Jeff now, that grabbed our bill today, [referring to man from breakfast after church – different than agronomist] he’s said that through the years too, “If you ever need some help you know, just give me call.” This Tom O’Brien, he was retired and then he said, “Oh I grew up on a farm. I would just love to help you on the farm.” Well, we don’t need the help, that’s the thing, but people would be willing to from the church if we called but we don’t. We don’t need the help. And we’re not gonna stop working.
●	Judy2	Issues/ conflicts\ Moving/land issues	128	128	I mean I wasn’t, we weren’t gonna get bigger. We were all happy with it just the way it was. It was profitable and even our accountant now will tell you it’s a profitable farm. You know ‘cause you expand and where does it stop? Then your heifer facility isn’t big enough. Your calf facility isn’t big enough. Your land, you need more land, I mean it just keeps growing. So we were adequately, we had what we needed.
●	Jeannette2	Issues/ conflicts\ Moving/land issues	79	79	Well, what is ends up looking like is we move land constantlyso there is not enough time to go through that whole cycle. And when you’re intensively growing carrots and such a... when you’re growing carrots and lettuce for the schools you know everything doesn’t match up perfectly, so you just plant where there is row ready. So we in the process of the two to three years I have been working here, tried to learn how to not go to farming with such an emergency mentality of urgency of [voice goes higher/faster and emphasizes stress] “Okay we’ll plant here, we’ll plant there.” But kind of see the bigger picture of how can we set up our fields so that it facilitates this movement of soil stewardship instead of just planting.
●	Jeannette2	Issues/ conflicts\ Moving/land issues	87	87	Here we moved and there are weeds everywhere and tons of birds, lots of bugs... lots of bugs... and um, and when it rains it only takes one day for the soil to dry out enough for us to walk on where over in Santa Paula it would be, ya know, sticky for a week or so.
●	Jeannette2	Issues/ conflicts\ Moving/land issues	89	89	actually the Oxnard plain is the technical name and how it was formed was, um, Like a long ... I don’t know how many years ago, but a lot of years in the past this all used to be an ocean and those moutains right there slowly as years went past all the rivers would flow into the ocean. So when the ocean retreated then all these nutrients were left on this flat surface you can see. So the soil is absolutely prime which is why land prices are so high which is why strawberries are grown here because it is a very thirsty crop. So that is why we, that is where our land problems come from is we’re trying to grow vegetables in a, ya know, growing vegetables in a Beverly Hills and try to buy a piece of land in Beverly Hills – it’s just not too easy.



●	Jeannette2	Issues/ conflicts	107	107	Initially, my whole intern year was being angry (laughter) about the microaggression that would happen as a woman in the field. So for example, on the daily having men come up to us and tell us, especially Reyna – I didn't know what I was doing at that point, but she has known what she is doing and I kind of used that help but they are always coming and being like, "Hey you are doing this wrong," or "Hey, you should do it this way," or "Hey, I know more about this than you and clearly you are going to fail." But here we are and she's a great farm manager, great farmer. so little things like that.
●	Jeannette2	Issues/ conflicts	107	107	I think it's hard for me to answer that question because I do feel like I am a newcomer to agriculture in general so a lot of the difficulties of just trying to break into a new community all alongside being woman. I think in general the experience that I've had is when people find out the Abundant Table, specifically find out about Reyna as woman, Latina, farm manager, they are, they explode because they are so excited that something like that exists because it's so rare.
●	Jeannette2	Issues/ conflicts	111	111	I am not a traditional farmer in the sense that I grew up on a piece of land and it's been passed down in my family for generations as well as growing practices as well as concept and ideology. So I am a newcomer to this space in a very non-traditional person to be in this field. And I think to add to the woman question, the main reaction I've gotten from people is like, "You're not gonna be here in like in another year. You're not gonna be here in three years because it's hard work and you're gonna get dirty and I'm like, 'I know. I am really dirty right now actually!!'" But because as a newcomer, part of working here and in conjunction with us moving so often to land to land to land is this feeling of rootlessness as a young farmer as not having a tradition to fall back to and so more so this work here is about the daily weeding and it's about the harvesting and it's about the crop planning and all that. But it's also about finding my place as a young farmer in this new generation of young farmer's in America because there are so many of us and um, so I'm just trying to like figure out who I want to be and how to utilize this market that is very geared towards a different demographic to grow food and ya know change the system somehow to make it easier and more sustainable, like economically sustainable.

●	Jeannette2	Issues/ conflicts	123	123	I would say large picture, big picture, the reason why I am such a big fan of the Abundant Table beyond the obvious ya know we get vegetables from them, they pay me, is they're one of the first sustainable farms that sees sustainability in a bigger than just ecological sustainability but more, there's people harvesting that food that is grown without pesticides and what are we to do with them? What about when they get sick? What about...so, I've met a lot of farmers who focus so much on caring for the land but not for the very present people who are on their land too. So, I, I, I think there has been so much government bureaucratic action on making like USDA um, improving the organic legislature and surrounding that, but I don't see as much happening with the um, the the, the sustainability of the people who are working for the people who are growing organic vegetables. There's this like invisible line there where compost and no-till and chickens and ya know, there's been so much thought put into creating this integrated food system on a piece of land, but then like, still high rank folks for a day laborer paying them practically nothing and not caring for their bodies in the right way. So that's my biggest wish, but then again if you ask me if the follow-up question is how do I change that, I have no idea.
●	Jeannette2	Issues/ conflicts	125	125	I think because we have a bit of a race problem and socio-economic problem in America. So it's possible to drive down the 101 and see people bent over and picking in a 90 degree day and not feel conflict in your soul about that. Because they are dressed in raggedy clothes, um, or because they came here illegally or whatever. So I think there's just a lot of rhetoric that we have grown up within that prevents us from realizing that this is an actual problem.
●	Jeannette2	Issues/ conflicts	153	155	<p>It hasn't so far, just little things, little things. But it would be nice to have this part of the church in that way.</p> <p>K: What do you think hinders that?</p> <p>J: Details wise – it's the fact that the church demographic typically is a lot of older folks who don't cook with these vegetables very much.</p>
●	Reyna	Issues/ conflicts	5	5	I was born in Mexico City so in the city there's no farms. In school, there was definitely a lot of education around recycling and taking care of the environment. So on that side I did have a little bit of education surrounding the farm. When I moved here, and started working, I mean nothing was really normal for me. I noticed the pesticides in the fields and started making a connection between pesticides and farm worker health which was kind of like the last thing spoken about.

●	Reyna	Issues/ conflicts	7	7	It was at my work at the Abundant Table, but I started hearing about that, but I wasn't experiencing the pesticides, but just those issues started hearing and learning about those issues of pesticides in the fields. So then I started realizing what a disconnect there was through the conversations she was hearing at the fields of the Abundant Table what a disconnect there was between food production and farmworkers health and the food that we eat.
●	Reyna	Issues/ conflicts	22	22	And then other men, sometimes farmers, would come to work on the fields in Santa Paula and tell me, "Oh you're not doing your job well; it's not gonna work this way." And I would say to them, "Oh okay," but I would really try to tune them out and tell the plants, "No, no, it's gonna work." And then the same workers would come back a couple weeks later and see the progress and be like, "Hey, how did that work out?" So I could see if you have the right attitude and you take care of them, the plants will receive it.
●	Reyna	Issues/ conflicts	27	27	What Angel was talking about – work abuses do happen. But the problems really with two people, the abuser and the victim. And lots of times victims don't want to get out of that place. It's a lot of lack of education and a union – lack of a union. And wanting progress. Because sometimes we are just happy with what we have or people are just happy with what they have because people say, "Oh things are bad but they are not that bad, they could be worse." So they just accept a lot of things. I think one possible solution would be to have open workshops or open educational session directly in the fields for the farmworkers. And really I think an important educational pieces is to let them know that if you don't give yourself value, no one else is going to value you. That may be one way to solve it.
●	Reyna	Issues/ conflicts	29	29	It's a problem sometimes with the bathrooms, like people who work in the office, they get nice bathrooms and it's tiled and then the people who work all day in the fields in the sun sometimes it can be 2 weeks before they clean the bathrooms. And so you know, I would be like, "Hey Sarah," and send text and send reminders about the issues in the bathroom and then I would tell the other farmers you have to talk to your bosses about it, you have to tell them. But they would say, "No, it's okay. We don't use the bathrooms that much." But then I would say "No that's not right. They're washing those other bathrooms all the time, they can wash these ones too." And that's what I like about the church is that you can really give value to people. We're all one body and we all have different jobs, but we all are one.
●	Sarah	Issues/ conflicts	3	3	Eucharist and Communion and the breaking of bread. Every Sunday we had a Eucharist service with a potluck afterwards and felt like food and table fellowship and also access to the table, both access to the Eucharist table but also access to food, farm worker's rights, issues around food access, food justice, food sovereignty were things as a campus ministry we were interested in.

●	Sarah	Issues/ conflicts\ Moving/land issues	9	9	ya know another story of having to move – nothing lasts
●	Sarah	Issues/ conflicts\ Moving/land issues	16	16	He starts talking about the land and the berry farmers who are supposed to come in and take the land Sarah and her crew have been renting – they will move one plot down. But the berry farmers might pull out so in that case, he is open to talking about what they could do. Sarah tells me later this land goes for so much more because of the Oxnard plane. They could be renting land for the same space around \$600 a month in Bakersfield, but instead they are paying around triple that, and that is with a discount – usually the land is \$5,000 a month.
●	Sarah	Issues/ conflicts	20	20	if they are not housed in relationships to each other and to ya know for us and to the earth and to God, exploring kind of a full relationship with yourself I think the alternative just becomes oh I think it becomes its own worst enemy and just becomes part of what breaks us down.
●	Sarah	Issues/ conflicts\ Moving/land issues	30	30	Because we don't own land, I'm always looking for new property, always looking for new potential land lords, always looking for what could we own somewhere or could we find a place that would lease us at a low – those are things that are constantly – there's always a crisis. So a lot of crisis management, yeah.
●	Sarah	Issues/ conflicts\ Moving/land issues	38	38	Though one thing I would say what we're hoping.. our kind of dream, dream, dream is to have like a ranch. I think everyone on the team, Reyna, Guadalupe, myself, we'd fill a ranch with animals, like goats and pigs and um, ducks and geese and chickens and so that's the dream that we have, but can't do anything longterm until we find a long term space.
●	Sarah	Issues/ conflicts	50	50	I am often like if I go to a farm bureau meeting or some of the meeting that we are having, I'm often the youngest person in the room and one of a handful of women.
●	Sarah	Issues/ Conflicts \Moving/land issues	50	50	also, I will leave the meeting feeling really well respected that people are like, "You're doing so much Sarah, that's so amazing what you're doing." And that makes me feel good. And then as I'm thinking about it, I'm like, "Wait, I'm the one that's working. Like, most of the men are gonna home and not think twice about what's going on. And I'm actually the one developing the proposal or I'm sharing more of the weight of whatever it is that are group is doing because I depend on its success more than anyone else does because everyone else has a job, has family money, are older men, so they're established. And that I'm, my work is around my survival or around the survival of my community. In some way, and I do put some of that to being a female, to being a young adult in this era, not all of it, some of it is just where you were born and happened to land. But that is definitely – it's neat to connect with other women, but then having this ah –ha moment and that everyone's kind of celebrating it but then having this ah ha moment like, we're always working harder because our survival is different.

●	Sarah	Issues/ conflicts	54	54	You know so many of our choices about being intentional about how we relate to farm workers and our community, how we treat our own staff, are connected, come out of a faith commitment to equity and food sovereignty.
●	Sarah	Issues/ conflicts\ Moving/land issues	54	54	But I think we're also exploring what is the language that we want to use to talk about spirituality and faith and ecology and stewardship and the theology of place. We were actually saying a theology of place and displacement because it seems you can't talk about place without talking about displacement because I think that's what pretty much everyone in our community has experienced. And then, so how do we begin to explore replacing ourselves every time we're displaced and what's the role we play? Like what's the role of faith in leaving a place and coming to a new place?
●	Sarah	Issues/ conflicts\ Moving/land issues	62	62	Oh for land access, access to land, 100%. I mean there's other, I mean, that impacts us, I, obviously farm worker rights and work around that, there's lots of issues. But for us really specifically access, access to reasonably priced land or to our own land.
●	Sarah	Issues/ conflicts\ Moving/land issues	66	66	I would actually say even some of what we were talking about earlier with Phil, specifically here we are on some of the best, richest soil in the country and some of the highest land rent prices because what can grow here are strawberries and berries and we our county basically grows the majority of the strawberries and berries for around the world along with Watsonville and part of Mexico. It's this coastal climate and what has happened it that because strawberries can be sold at such a high premium that means that strawberries growers can pay more and more rent. Which means when we first started farming here organic land at market rate was about \$300,000 per acre per year which is high across the county. Now 6-7 years later it's almost \$5,000 per acre per year which is, for example if this helps in Bakersfield you're looking at \$600 per acre per year.
●	Sarah	Issues/ conflicts\ Moving/land issues	68	68	that it is unprecedented cost of land. There's no way any beginning farmer here and the rent that we pay where we were at is half of that and we're still that's still a big chunk. I think some of the others, so what it's connected to is a world food, like kind of like the larger food system that's not focused on feeding the local community but focused on getting profit and then ya know you have land owners, may or may not be rightly so, want the best they can get for rent prices and you understand where that comes from because that's what people, ya know when you talk about kind of world views and values we operate off of the world view or value that we've always known unless you've encountered a different one at some point and so we keep perpetuating that. The other thing is I think because the cost of, the price of labor, we pay people so poorly it allows.

●	Sarah	Issues/ conflicts\ Moving/land issues	70	70	<p>agriculture. Not the Abundant Table, yeah we don't pay great, but we definitely don't pay poorly. Here in Oxnard, in Ventura County, ya know, if farm workers were paid a living wage and were given health benefits the growers couldn't afford to pay the rent that they're paying because it would be going towards people's livelihoods but instead they are choosing somehow the system has created that it's okay to pay crazy amounts in rent but it's not a value to pay your workers a living wage and so I just feel it's a false, I mean it's a bubble. We're kind of operating in a bubble. That's kind of some issues that are play and it's ya know small – medium scale farming is such a, it's not a profit producing it's not profit producing and so we'll never make enough to pay rent here unless it's subsidized. And also recognizing bigger companies get subsidies in other ways. I actually read in a magazine, this is a more conservative ag magazine, that 2/3s of all agricultural entities farmers reported a loss on their IRS statement in the country. That means 2/3s of all farms are not, are losing farms are losing money but are subsidized somewhere else whether that's family money, government subsidies, for us it's grant money and nonprofit. Ya know, we all get it somewhere else. So I think it's a myth that any farm, to think that any one farm, large or small is surviving on its own merit of just growing and selling any size.</p>
●	Sarah	Issues/ conflicts\ Moving/land issues	72	72	<p>No there's no young farmers and it's actually declining because most young farmers are getting out. It's been 10 years since I've been doing this. When I first started it was such a big, exciting thing and now the stories are coming out like why doesn't, why are people, like why is it not working? So many young farmers who started are leaving because it's just not a viable, it's not economically viable anymore. Which is an indictment on our larger; it's an indictment on the country's how it values agriculture and the food it eats and then also our low cost of food, international trade agreements, and just corporate farming and that's what it's gonna become actually.</p>
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●		Sarah	Issues/ conflicts\ Moving/land issues	77	77	Every time it's just we put it out to people. We start letting know folks we are looking. Actually, every time we've had to look we just get so much support from folks helping us look for, find something. So we get lots of offers, most are not viable at all which is that is the problem, most are just, "What about this" which is not a real option. But that's usually how and we just come across the next right fit and pursue that. So that's good, actually our next, we are looking at talking to the local school districts about leasing land. Getting a long term lease from a local school district to grow produce for their school, their larger community and then do on site education with the youth.
●		Sarah	Issues/ conflicts\ Moving/land issues	87	87	Yeah, I mean I think the problem of having to move one of the biggest challenges is that every time we've had to move it takes about a good 6 months to get used to the new fields so we lose a lot of incomes because we're not producing as much. And that puts a lot of stress on everyone. Because 1. You just don't feel good about yourself when things aren't growing the way you had anticipated. There's also just a huge learning curve in a new place, even, you're just changing 5 miles, you're changing micro climates and so it's a big shift and you know every farmer and land lord has their own kind of like sphere that's been created based on how they grow and it's probably different from the previous one. So that's been a huge challenge, creates a lot of stress for the entire community both the team that's growing find it just doesn't feel great to feel like you're working so hard and you know things aren't happening how they used to. Like what you knew worked before isn't working the same way. But then also just trying to manage finances and kind of cover that so moving is hard in that sense because it's just such a challenge
●		Sarah	Issues/ conflicts\ Moving/land issues	87	87	I would say our growth as a community as an organization in some ways I think can just financially stably and it's also just been a drain on people's emotions and energy. It's really been a barrier to our growth and our success and kind of viably in some ways because we never, as soon as we begin to hit our stride, we have to start all over again and that doesn't feel great
●	In regards to when they move	Sarah	Issues/ conflicts\ Moving/land issues	87	87	But on the positive side, what does happen is that we meet new people and make new friends and it builds this kind of bigger community that we could've never anticipated. And I think because our team comes with such, approaches everything with such joy and connection and that relationship is such an important piece no matter where we go we create great relationships. Like we still have relationships at the previous farm that we still go to lunch with and like I think that would happen here again.
●		Sarah	Issues/ conflicts\ Moving/land issues	87	87	Like the other workers who are here that see a different way of how we do things and also just inspiring folks who are in sustainable agriculture to not just see it as production but like to really see a different side and so I think, I think we've been a gift to every place we've gone.

●	Sarah	Issues/ conflicts\ Moving/land issues	91	91	more and more small-medium sized farms – especially kind of mixed vegetable crops, farmer's markets farms, CSA farms, young entry level farmers, like it's probably becoming more and more unlikely, that any, like the family farm model where it's like a couple that start a farm and employ a few people and they make enough to kind of run a business, I think that's becoming less, unless they're inheriting land, it's becoming less and less a reality and then it really does take like agriculture in the future is gonna start taking partnerships between just different community entities to keep a small farm going. Now it could be owned by a private family, but their survival is not gonna happen within themselves, they're gonna be dependent upon a maybe a non-profit partner or a church or a religious organization that provides other resources or a school. Like it's gonna require not your basic business partnership, but another layer of the farm is gonna be supported by more than just the family.
●	Sarah	Issues/ conflicts	101	101	it makes such a big difference as people get to know their food system. Figuring out how to educate yourself and this is something we've thought about doing with churches – how to break down a meal, like you have a potluck, can you breakdown where everything came from? Beginning to know your kind of global and local food system is really important to understanding where the barriers and breakdowns are and where the positive lights are. And then that would hopefully inspires folks to get to know a farmer or a rancher or an urban gardener and being to kind of explore what their life is like and how they're trying to survive. I think getting involved in anything around farm worker issues is really important and there are definitely organizations in different regions that address that but that's connected to immigration and economics and just recognizing how interconnected and just trying to figure out what organizations in one's community are working on these things.
●	Sarah	Issues/ conflicts	115	115	how we choose to participate in the, we all participate in the food system. It's how we participate in the food system that we have a choice around.
●	Sarah	Issues/ conflicts	121	121	They want to at least move it a statewide conversation but felt like it's easier to pass something at the country level and then as an example and then to, and our farm and Phil's farm, we're the only two farmers who have signed on so far, but they've interviewed several others but it's controversial. And it's coming from a controversial organization too, which we like them, but I recognize in politics things are left or right and people don't see in the middle.
●	Sarah	Issues/ conflicts	127	127	where it becomes a challenge with our faith affiliation is in, because we run a business that is for all people regardless of faith, like for some folks recog.. when they find out that we, cuz it's on our website that we're our faith based is people would say, very few, so for me, it's not a big deal, I'm kind of like "whatever, I really don't care" but they don't want to participate because it makes them feel, ya know just bad feelings about Christian stuff, which I get, I totally get it, so it's not offensive but it's not a large enough number of people that we would change our model.



●	Sarah	Issues/ conflicts	129	129	probably my more cynical side, we have so many young folks in our community that I think they're just like, "Oh that's good, there they are. There are the young people." And that's more within the mainline Protestant church, that's not the case everywhere.
●	Sarah	Issues/ conflicts	131	131	because we'll have like a land blessing or I'll have a service or they come to one of our weekend CSA event and it's just, I think because our staff and our team is in such good spirit and are excited to connect, they see the health of our organization. And I think that's actually a big thing, people feel how healthy we are and I think so many churches are unhealthy and people, politics, and dynamics, and it's like you're arguing over the linen or where this decoration is going to go and what's happened is people are stuck and even, not that we don't have the things that kind of get us stuck, but I think we work really really hard to model healthy relationship and not just healthy relationship to how we farm, but healthy relationship to how we interact with each other and I think people see that and experience that and so that's kind of the experience of community where it's like this mutuality of care and love and support and celebration versus just kind of perpetuating what we've always done. And we perpetuate what we've always done, but I think in a diff... in a way that doesn't I think just feels stifling.
●	Sarah	Issues/ conflicts	133	133	I feel strongly that like churches, especially churches within the mainline protestant church, there's lots of money in the pews, it's less and less but it's still lots of money in land and I feel strongly that they should be supporting farmers with, as much, within their communities as much as they can whether they're faith based or they're not. Like I think an investment in the people who are growing food in their community whether they eat it or they donate it to a food bank, but that I just think there is no reason not to and really feel like churches should probably connect themselves to some sort of agricultural community if they can.
●	Sarah	Issues/ conflicts	137	137	Probably take a look at their theology.

●	Alice	Tension life/death	20	20	One thing I love about gardening is – I love being outside. I love working outside. And I love life. I love working with life. And I like taking care of life – I mean, I realize I do a lot of killing of things – as a gardener. But I... yeah, like food is cool, and eating is alright, and you know, like, I mean I like that the things that we're growing are food and that they're really good food and that they're this sort-of, like, gift of love to all these people – some of whom we know, and some of whom we'll never know. And they'll never know that we care about them – but it's like this packet of, like, ecosystem and life, and health, and you know – that's amazing. But I, you know, I'm not as – like, for me the work that I like better than... For a lot of people it's the harvest they really love, or it's the cooking and eating; and I like that that's all part of our life on the farm, but I like caring for the plants. I like taking care of that life. And I like trying to... it's this weird balance of trying to care for biology and ecosystem while struggling against it in this weird ... making these rows, and this control, and this neatness, and yet, like, trying not to destroy this wonderful web of soil. And trying to have this huge amount of biodiversity in the things we plant and in the things that we want to let be. But then, like, just feeling like, well we have rabbit habitat everywhere and – how do we keep the rabbits from eating everything and... I don't know.
●	Alice	Tension life/death	72	72	so, we were really slow to introduce animals here. 'Cause I think it's a just a – one, it's just a huge responsibility; and I think everything is life and death on the farm. Every plant, but, I don't know, I feel like an animal is a bigger responsibility than, I don't know, than a tree? You can't – you know you could neglect a tree for a whole year and it would probably be fine.
●	Alice	Tension life/death	80	82	Right, so the deer fence helps a lot. So we fence certain sections – like the low chicken wire. So, there's a section down there – like all the Brassicas – well, there's a little fenced in section up there. So there are things that are in really high demand or rabbits – so, we'll fence them when they're young. And as they get bigger the... yeah, and the rabbits have been getting worse – because we're here. Like, the rabbits have been terrible in town because there's so many people. I mean, the rabbits are safe because they don't have predators. When we first lived here, no one had lived here for a couple years. So, the coyotes were running right through so the rabbit population was pretty low. So, hopefully... our cat is good at catching babies – bunnies – and eating them. I don't know. I mean, we do need to start hunting, I think, but again, like... Nate's dad is a super big hunter, but Nate, I don't know. I mean, I don't have any practice hunting. So, I'd have to learn how to kill things and butcher them. It's not like, the most exciting... [laughter]
					KR: But, you'd be okay doing it?
					A: I'm not morally opposed.

●	Alice	Tension life/death	82	88	<p>I was trying to learn how to butcher a chicken – ‘cause we had a sick chicken and one of our farm team members came and was like, “I’ll kill the chicken,” and I was like, “I’ll watch so I can learn.” And it was, like, really hard. And I like...</p> <p>KR: Yeah, you gotta do more than one to learn that.</p> <p>A: And I was like – I was gonna faint. I just didn’t expect it. I got this huge rush of blood to my head. And I got really light-headed. And I was like, “oh, this is not gonna be easy...” If I’m gonna kill things. So, I don’t know. Yeah. I mean, clearly it would be a good thing to be able to do – like, in theory, I could be like, lovingly, respectfully, killing something – but I don’t know, it’s hard. I mean, I’m a pacifist, I don’t believe in like... I’m like an anarchist. I don’t believe in domination of any kind or violence of any kind. But it’s okay if I kill an animal... maybe that doesn’t make any sense. But... I do like to eat meat. I don’t know. I feel like, in theory it’s alright for me to hunt things and eat them. I just...</p> <p>KR: No, that’s great, I mean, I understand - that tension, I think, it’s different when you talk to a vegetarian who’s like, “I’m a vegetarian, I don’t want to kill things.” And then you talk to someone who’s a vegetable farmer and... One of the other farmers said, “The very first thing I had to do was go around and kill all these cucumber beetles.” This was in California. And she was like, “There’s killing in farming. No matter what you want to think it is.” So, she stopped being a vegetarian after that. So that’s in, like, everyone’s stories. Is – how do you handle this tension of – you live on the land. You’re part of it. So...</p> <p>A: Yeah. It’s a really interesting thing, though. In human psychology because, I think about, killing bugs. Like, I remember having to kill cutworms on the potatoes and feel like we collected them and we put them in a little cup and we threw them in a lake. And then, I was on another farm where we were squishing bugs with our fingers! Which is like, it’s way harder to do than picking them off and putting them in a little container. You can put ‘em in a little container and feed ‘em to your chickens. Which is like, actually, pretty cool, I feel good about that. Or you could spray them with a chemical and then they’re all like, they kinda disappear, or like... you don’t even see their carcasses. I feel like they just stop coming there or, I don’t know... they’re dead somewhere. Or...</p> <p>KR: The a-bomb for bugs...</p> <p>A: Exactly. And so I think about, I think about warfare and I think about the drones we’re using and the way that we wage war. You know, how we – one, we don’t want to think about them as</p>
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human beings, but we're like, really want to distance ourselves from the people that we're killing and I don't... I understand it. I'm just like, it's really hard to squish bugs [30:00 II] with my hands. It's much easier to throw them in the lake. You know, and I'm just like, yeah... It's easier to gas people than to like, kill them. I don't know. It is a sort of brutal world. And yeah, I don't like killing anything. And I don't have to do it very much. I mean, I kill a lot of plants, I guess. I do a lot of weeding, but we don't kill a lot of bugs on our farm.

●	Alice	Tension life/death	133	135	<p>KR: You talked about taking care of the plants – does that play into it?</p> <p>A: yeah, I mean, like, definitely – I mean, like, a little seed. You know, I mean, seeds are just amazing. I just think, like, every moment, every thing – like in every space and every moment there's like so many amazing, miraculous things, like, whether it's beauty, or whether it's kindness, or whether it's life... you know, and like, in that same moment there are so many terrible, horrible, heart-breaking things. And I, I don't know, I wanna just, like, be able to be in a space where I can acknowledge how, sometimes, horrible things are and yet still be present with how wonderful things are.</p> <p>But, like, seeds – I just feel like seeds are such this obvious little miracle- you know, they're just this, like, speck of dirt or something – they're just like this little pellet of deadness – I know it's just such a typical metaphor, but they're just like, so amazing. It's this thing that can be sitting inert for years and years, you know, and then like this right moment, and it just turns into this new life – and like, it's just, like, so small, and I can... again, it's like the name of our farm – I'm being so, like, cliché, but I just feel like every seed is just a miracle.</p>
●	Louise2	Tension life/death	19	19	<p>Also the pigs that were brought here are a huge danger so eventually, we managed to get the farm fenced. 'Cause you cannot grow those native plants without fencing, because the pigs will come in. They're like candy to cattle, and pigs, and goats, and sheep. And so, you have to exclude the undulates because there were none here before man came, and man kept bringing more and that was one of the things that destroyed the native plantings.</p>

●	Louise2	Tension life/death	55	57	<p>So, it's a fungus that is sprayed on the trees in a water solution – lots of water – a small bit of fungus. And it's the only thing that will save our crop now. It's all over the world. We were the last place to become infested with it. And there... the fungus that we're using is also native to this area, but that fungus died because of a prolonged drought. So this season, is... I'm not expecting it to be great, because of the drought. It gives the...it kills our native resident fungus. There's also another beetle that actually will attack the coffee berry borer. And they came, NRCS came, and... or actually it was the extension service from the University of Hawaii, came, and surveyed our land and said, "yes, we found that beetle on your land."</p> <p>KR: So, it's a good thing? Okay.</p> <p>L: Yes, it's a good thing! I think it's called theCatharsiusbeetle. And if you don't have it, they actually encourage you to go and get larvae and raise it on your land because it's a biological control over the coffee berry boor.</p>
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●	Louise2	Tension life/death	66	70	<p>Years ago on this farm, I was out walking amongst the coffee trees and I was actually weeding, I was pulling weeds. And I went under a coffee tree and I, there was this nest that was the size of this placemat. And it had like 16 eggs in it. It was a turkey nest. And I was so in awe of that. I mean, the only thing you can't keep out with a fence, well, there are lots of things – mice, rats, the ... what are those other infernal things?</p> <p>KR: The muskrats?</p> <p>L: From India... oh, I can't come up with the name, but I'll remember in a minute... You cannot keep out rodents and you cannot keep out birds. And so the birds are just a delight. Our turkeys – we watched them nest last year when our youngest daughter was here. And, the fact that they feel at home here and that they walk around and you can walk through the coffee fields and you'll come upon them and you can just talk to them, it's like, "Hey, girls! Didn't know you were here." And the pheasants. The Kalijpheasants, the same thing. And they get used to you. And they don't feel threatened. And they'll walk off. And they're doing their own thing. To hear them moving around the coffee field is a really neat thing. Really neat. I don't have any need for pets, because those wild birds are here. Mongoose.</p> <p>KR: Mongoose – that's what they are.</p> <p>L: We trap the mongoose. We actually trap and kill because they are a huge danger to the birds. The wild chickens, they eat those. Our turkeys will hatch out like 13 eggs and a week later they're down to two (2), two (2) "turklets" we call them (laughter). And we found out that chickens can count, but turkeys can't. Because they don't seem to notice that kids are missing. But they provide incredible entertainment for us. Besides their gobbling in the morning, and in the evening. They roost up in the big Ohia trees. And so they fly up there every night. You hear this big fluttering of wings and they sit up there and then they come down in the morning and they do all their gobbling before they come down in the morning. So they're extremely entertaining. I'm conscious as I walk through the field of all the little skinks. The little black lizard-like creatures that are part of that whole ecosystem. I don't know what they're doing, but they're doing stuff down there. They're eating bugs and the turkeys eat the bugs and the... So they're definitely part of that ecosystem that makes everything grow. They also provide fertilizer – a small amount – but right under where they roost, you find a lot scat on the ground.</p>
●	Louise2	Tension life/death	72	72	<p>You sometimes see large numbers of a certain bird and you think, "what are they doing to the native birds?" which are really kind of rare. And that's why we're so conscious of trying to provide habitat for them. So, it's a – you can't undo everything that's been done. You have to be realistic about where you are in the process. But we really do appreciate all of them.</p>

●	Louise2	Tension life/death	72	72	The other thing is the Earth Worms. Oh my gosh! When we first bought this land and we started planting things. We were like, “Look!” Every time we turn a rock over and find an earth worm, it was like so exciting, it was like, “we really do have soil! There really are worms here. It’s so exciting.” And it’s like, these two grown people being so excited about worms! (laughter) It’s like, yeah, that’s like, really cool. And yeah, there are big centipedes too, up there, but they don’t bother me. It’s like, okay, you guys are part of it too. Yeah, I’m sure you’re munching stuff up and excreting stuff out. And you know, it’s like, it’s just all part of it. So, the mongoose are the hardest thing. Feral cats are also a big problem. In terms of the birds and the geckos. Because they are such good hunters. And people tend to keep cats to keep the mice down. That’s a conflict thing for me. It’s hard. I just let ‘em be. Bob’s more aggressive. I just, you know, if he sees one, he’ll go out and yell at it. That’s the least of what he’ll do, but he doesn’t like cats. So, that’s his thing.
●	Louise2	Tension life/death	73	73	And I’m actually – it sometimes, it gives me angst – the things we do do, what is it disturbing? What is it, you know like, this place could sit just the way it is, and what would happen? I don’t know. There’s no way of telling. I can tell you that bugs will eat a lot of leaves on my young trees. (laughter) I can tell you that. They can produce pretty good lace. But there’s one kopiko tree down there that is - it has been eaten so many times and it’s like, “No, I’m gonna try one more time!” The Kapiko trees are called the “praying hands tree” because that’s the way their leaves come up. And then they spread out. So that’s their nickname.
●	Louise2	Tension life/death	83	83	However, they do eat native insects and so they are considered a threat to the ecosystem.
●	Louise2	Tension life/death	186	186	The– KCFA – the Kona Coffee Farmer’s Association – is much better at advocating for Farmer’s Workers and Farm workers and saying, “You need to have the proper facilities for them. You need to do that...” And then the members say, “Oh, you don’t need that...” So, yeah. It’s, uh, mind boggling. The major tension for me is, yes, I would like to get rid of most of the coffee so that I did not have to worry about that labor force. But, I have to worry about that labor force! They’re a part of my community. So that’s a huge tension in my life. And the... but there are churches now that have Hispanic services. The first one’s English, the second one’s Hispanic. And that’s really good because there is a large Hispanic population here. And they are mostly coffee farmers. And they are trying to do their own cooperatives. And really take a bigger niche in the market. We have the Japanese, the Chinese, the Filipino, the Anglos, and the Hispanics – who are all doing coffee farming. And have their own little niche in it. So, it’s pretty interesting.



●	Louise2	Tension life/death	206	206	I came up with several of 'em, but that was the one that I settled upon. It is really important for, to perpetuate the water flow on this island. It's important to have trees and important to recognize how important creation is. And, that the way we've done it for so long in agriculture is not the best way.
●	Amber2	Tension life/death	4	4	We always, my dad would always bring new animals and I remember that sort of thing. And then, you know, then he just laid down on the couch one day and died. You know, um, I was 5. We were all in the house together and it was a very, um, real moment. You know, but at 5 you're processing it very differently. So I think there's definitely a break at that point for me and um, my mom was strong [emphasis put on 'strong']. You know she embraced suffering. She would go back through her history of farmfamilyand her relatives and just say, "This is our story. We're gonna live it." So the farm all sort of wrapped in for me this greater narrative.
●	Amber2	Tension life/death	16	16	It also alienates you a little bit because you're so not part of the regular world anymore. I have to fight sometimes to get, to understand where people are. Not fight, but.. it's just, I just, I don't come into a conversation easily a lot of times because I'm seeing so much of Him and so much of His truth that anytime I say anything that doesn't look like His truth as shown in nature and, and in this work, I'm sort of like, "that's not true." (laughter) It's fine, and you have free will and you can live like that, but um, let me tell you how the, ya know, what scripture says and how this works in.
●	Amber2	resurrection	26	26	Spring is, spring is exciting just as it should be. It's resurrection. It's life. It's everything coming. You're celebrating every new step
●	Amber2	Tension life/death	32	32	Who they are. I wish they never got sick. I wish they never died. But they do. And you come in. Um, yeah, I think just caring for them I think is my experience mostly and being patient and discipline like knowing when I need them to do something. There's a woman who said, "You ask them nicely once and you demand it the second time." And I think she's right or you just end up wasting a lot of energy. But you definitely have to train them. So, there's asking and then there's okay, "I get to be the boss." And that's okay. That's my God-given role and always has to be done with kindness. Maybe like parenting. There's a line where you need to be the one dictating the flow so that that is good experience.
●	Amber2	Tension life/death	46	46	Well I think, first of all, the world view of God as a creator. A creator. A perfect creator, it was very good. There is design, there is purpose, there is order, there's such a strong force and it s talks about man having this tremendous capacity for good at creation and you can feel that on the farm. I mean the life, I'm gonna say "life force" for lack of a better word.

●	Amber2	Tension life/death	48	48	But that propelling of life for as much as this world is messed up, you can feel it you know in spring, in a new calving and, and you see that. So I think as you're starting to just look at this world and say, "Okay, well I see that. I see creation and I want, I want things to be like that." You know I want to hold on to those moments and you just, you can't when you're here. The fall just, the fall is so present and not only around you, but in you, you know your attitude and how you're facing things. But I think in nature it's easier to separate from yourself and go, "Even if everything's perfect. Even if I treat the animals perfectly, death and decay is still going to happen." So what does that mean? How, you know how do you reconcile? I still have to cull cows at the end it you know. I don't like that. So what does this mean? So I think you start looking for worldview. You start looking for how do you order what I have to do within the context of a day. So, um, that's started as a very practical sort of-Bible, how do you start to do and very much came into the place of the Briscoes they teach Creation, Fall, Redemption, Glory.
●	Amber2	Tension life/death	48	48	You know the creation, and the capacity for good, but then the terrible for capacity for evil and then there's this transformation that comes through Jesus Christ and we're really still waiting for Glory. So what does this redemption period look like? It's very much this struggle between creation and fall. We can't go back now, we have to go forward and glory will be, gosh, what I'm reading and understanding, like wow. What the new heaven and new earth is gonna be like and how it's gonna bring everything to that you're seeing here, um, Jesus talks about or Isaiah talks about the Messianic reign and when, you know He'll come back with this peace and this righteousness and the wolf will lie down with the lamb and you know all of these nature pictures that they'll be a peace that will be just so penetrating
●	Amber2	Tension life/death	54	54	I could relate to them because like I told you with my mom telling all those stories about her family life like when my dad died, it wasn't out of context, it wasn't like "Oh woe is me, God has smited us!" you know, it was more, "Okay here's life, here's how it goes."
●	Amber2	Tension life/death	74	74	So then it was how do you best care for, manage, honor God in what you've been given? And as far as all these wonderful philosophies and theories of how things are supposed to be done, I feel like that's where you get the creation, fall, redemption, glory thing coming out again and again. Wow, I would like to perfect too. And if you could just control everything you know. But I think early on I learned that even if I do everything right, bad things are gonna happen. And even when things go well I don't think I always naturally took the credit, but I was very quick if something went wrong, I did something wrong, my management is bad, you know. And I think you just have to say, "well if something happened it doesn't hurt to say, "Okay God can I learn from this," you know. But most of the time, it's just life.
●	Amber2	Tension life/death	103	104	Right, when it's that big.  A: Um, so you know it's kind of the same tension with agriculture. It's not different.

●	Amber2	Tension life/death	112	112	but do you believe you live in the garden right now or do you believe you live in a desert? Because it matters. If you believe we live in the garden, every time you have a lack your going to doubt if God is good. But if you believe we're living in the desert, every provision, every cup of water, every shade is going to be blessing and gratitude and in America what do we do with this? We think we're in the garden and if we don't have everything just the way we want it, we're having great doubts of God and throwing, as opposed, I think that's the blessing. That's why God says blessed are the persecuted. I mean there's a simplicity in your life going, "this is it."
●	Judy2	Tension life/death	9	9	John actually had hernia surgery like Dec. of '79. That's when they found out he had the heart murmur and enlarged heart. So we had an appointment February to go a heart specialist, or he did, but he never made it. He came in from the barn after the chores on a Sunday night, laid down on the couch and died. So it was a just complete surprise. I mean we knew he was having problems too because we knew the heart was in the family, but we didn't know we had the Marfan's like his older brother's family had.
●	Judy2	Tension life/death	11	11	Marfan's syndrome. M-A-R-F-A-N-S. So then we found out after John died that had the, check the kids, ya know. So we found out Brett had the characteristics also. But he lived to be 28 then. And he had surgery to correct it and was fine but then had a heart attack. He had the surgery again, but he didn't come through that one.
●	Judy2	Tension life/death	21	21	Yeah, you've seen the pictures then. So we were shocking the grain and that kind of stuff. Those are the years I grew up. Yeah so, it's easy now. You know and even when John died he had this farm put together and why? Why did he have this farm put together in that many years? Ya know it's for us to farm. Ya know we had machinery up in our neighbor's shed. We had cattle over there where his mother lived then. I mean it's like you had, it was just kinda(pause) not together and then all of sudden everything came together here and then the shed was the last thing he built so then the machinery could be in the shed. You know so why? Why was this all? It was just all God's hand. That's what you see.
●	Judy2	Tension life/death	37	37	So I mean for Amber, she lost her dad, she lost her grandpa, she lost her brother. It's like everybody left her.

●	Judy2	Tension life/death	59	59	Amber and I always say that, and she always says too because of the fall we have to get rid of them but you know you realize that we wished everything could just stay forever. But we're getting to a point where we realize it's just meat now and don't keep them as long as we used to. We used to keep them until they were just about ready to drop, and now you know for safety reasons and whatever sending your meat out is a lot better. They're actually stricter now too with these rules. They have to look decent when they go to market. But we try to take as good of care of them as we can. I mean they're fed, they're clean, we work around them all the time so they're tame. They're pretty tame. I mean you can see yesterday when we're working around them. Isn't anything wild around here.
●	Judy2	Tension life/death	67	74	<p>Yeah, and you have all your barn cats</p> <p>J: (laughs) Yeah, they're all spayed and neutered. So they're pretty healthy. There's like 12 or 13 of them around here.</p> <p>K: And it seems like you like the little cat we fed yesterday.</p> <p>J: Yeah</p> <p>K: You like taking care of them</p> <p>J: Yeah. And if they're sick we make sure, we try to get them better and you know don't just let them die. We take good care of them just like your children.</p> <p>K: Yeah (laughs)</p> <p>J: Tami's really good at that. Like if there's somebody, like the tube feeding or something like that, she's right on that. She's right over here taking care of that. She's mothering them. She just has a patience for that. She's really funny with that.</p>
●	Jeannette2	Tension life/death	91	91	we are a spiritual bunch so we really like the birds and the bees and seeing the herons and there are tons of hawks that are constantly hunting in the fields so we love seeing them but as far as farmers go, it's not good (laughs). So you know, Guadalupe has his slingshot and he'll slingshot at them. And we try to put, ya know, little shiny ribbons to get rid of them.

●	Jeannette2	Tension life/death	121	121	This might be a little off topic but um, my favorite thing about working on the farm was I was a vegetarian when I first started working here and by working on the farm I realized that that is a way more complicated question than just not eating meat. Because one of my first weeks working on the farm, the task was to go and kill all of the cucumber beetles that were on the cucumbers so you had to walk around and pop cucumber beetles and I was thinking, “I thought we were growing vegetables here and I thought we didn’t have to kill anybody or anything?” (laughter) ya know. The more you kind of unravel what it means to grow food...where we as humans sit in that spool of thread, the more you realize, I realize I couldn’t be a vegetarian, you could, but not for the reasons I was doing it because growing food means killing lots of bugs, lots of worms, lots of little bunnies that live in the forest, lots of birds, lots of squirrels. Ya know, thinning is killing a whole bunch of baby plants, so that has been my favorite aha moment of oh my gosh! It’s so much more complicated than, um, ya know, if you want to advocate for animals, you can’t just pat yourself on the back, it’s not simple to pat yourself on the back for not eating meat. It’s more about you have to unpack what is going on in the meat culture and and buy meat that is sustainably raised if that is your angle into it.
●	Reyna	Tension life/death	7	7	I am making the comparison that earth, sometimes you may even think you are living a shitty life, excuse the language, ya know through kind of like all that death, you can be reborn in a very fertile place.
●	Reyna	Tension life/death	7	7	So it’s been a difficult process, but no not really difficult, just long. It’s been a long past couple years letting things in my life kind of die. In some aspects I am letting things die off and then in others she’s growing and then letting them die off and then growing – a process or a balance of death and life.
●	Reyna	Tension life/death	9	9	But sometimes I felt desperate like now what do I do? So I’m kind of mixing both issues, both topics of agriculture and faith. I was, as I was going through this process, I was also going through, on the land, with the agriculture, I was going through the same process with my faith. and what I call God. In some, .. I was hearing voices in my life telling me to let some things die and to let some things go. In Santa Paula in the fields in Santa Paula I had a complete transformation in my life. Like as a farmer, a worker, someone who works in agriculture and then in another side just as woman, as a mother, as a creator. Because when you’re weighed down by a lot of things you can’t create because something’s holding you back

●	Reyna	Tension life/death	9	9	A lot of seasons, I would put all of my energies into something really work. I learned how to put down seed, how to water, how to take care of the plants, how to weed. But then maybe a bunny comes or a ya know some sort of illness or too much heat, too much wind, a frost. I always wanted to have everything under control, like a perfectionist, have it be a certain way. I realized in the fields that I don't have the power to make anything perfect and also in my family I don't have the power to make everything perfect. Sometimes I couldn't understand it, but now it's a lot easier for me to accept. So sometimes in the farm we planned two rows of something in a particular are and then neither of them work, neither of them grow. So then the think this part of earth, this little land is kind of, has a problem. And then sometimes a third time we put something else and it did grow and blossom. So I really learned a lesson of persistence and to keep trying. And in it's own time it will work.
●	Reyna	Tension life/death	24	24	hat's a good question because now I feel I am just as crazy as everyone else. I can't really explain but we're created from the earth. So if you believe it or not, for me there is a really big connection. There's a phrase in Spanish that says, it's the earth that works. When I'm in the farm I feel free. For years I worked in fields but I didn't have that connection of seeing the creation. Because before, perhaps, my idea of God is that he's in the heavens, he's in the sky, but on the farm, you can see the cycles of life. And not only about just the seeds, so it can be you're not even working in a farm, that your hands aren't in the earth, but this pattern of planting and harvesting – it's in your life. You are always going to harvest what you've been planting. So if you're planting destruction, you're going to harvest destruction. So if you want to create or recreate your life your going to have a resurrection. So that's really how I see this God, this God of second chances that he will always be there to receive you. So it's like I was saying with that one little piece of earth that I had planted twice ya know, once it didn't work, another time it didn't and the third time it did. So maybe the first time it wasn't working because I wasn't putting my heart into it. And then when I did put my heart into it, it did work and it's the same with life.
●	Reyna	resurrection	24	24	So if you're planting destruction, you're going to harvest destruction. So if you want to create or recreate your life your going to have a resurrection
●	Reyna	Tension life/death Resurrection	25	25	But he showed me the way because when all the pain came out of my heart, I really experienced a death and resurrection in that moment and I was able to forgive my parents. Then I could really see how God was creating another life in me. So that's my relationship with faith. I feel like a plant doesn't actually have control over anything, but I can have strong roots and let God take care of me.

●	Sarah	resurrection	72	72	I feel like the church has role to play because what we do, we get up every morning to do the impossible and that's resurrection. It's the impossible thing that happened, that you never expected would happen but it happened, and so ya know every Sunday we believe in the resurrection and every day we should believe in the resurrection. So the role of the church is to say "We're gonna choose to do what doesn't make sense and what's gonna be impossible because that is, ya know, that's the narrative we have chosen to commit ourselves to" and so maybe it doesn't make sense for a secular or some other or even maybe another religious community to think that agriculture, small-scale agriculture, community-based agriculture is a good choice because it's maybe not a good choice in other terms but I feel like within the Christian church if we're committing to Christ in, kind of walking the way that Christ revealed in scripture, we're kind of committing to something that doesn't make any sense which is small-scale agriculture.
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